

sign

directions

April 2016 - No.150

Special
Sign & Digital Sign UK
Preview Issue

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READY, STEADY SHOW! - A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO SIGN & DIGITAL UK 2016

CUT OUT FOR PROFIT - GRAPTEC GB UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

ASSOCIATION NEWS - THE BSGA NEWSLETTER

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Sign Directions Hotline:

If you would like the contact details of any of the companies featured in this issue of Sign Directions, please ring **Tel: 01623 882398** for full company information, or alternatively, e-mail signdirections@btconnect.com for a response by return.

Coming Next:

The next issue of Sign Directions will be the May/June issue, which will include a comprehensive features on digital printing and finishing and routing and engraving



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Introduction

setting the scene

Following hot on the heels of our 20th anniversary last September, this month we are celebrating the publication of our 150th issue, an occasion that has prompted me to reflect on the ever-changing face of publishing.

Just as sign and display companies have had to get used to the intricacies of digital printing, as well as the day-to-day practicalities of running a business in these days of e-commerce, so newspapers and magazines have also had to learn to co-exist with the challenges thrown up by the raft of competing online titles and the wealth of free information that is now readily available via the internet. And, although it pains me to say it, generally speaking, we've been totally crap at it!

In fact, I'd go as far as to say that most of us are now in the unenviable position of doing twice the work for the same – or even worse – less revenue, as we are now having to offer some sort of online presence in addition to our printed versions.

Online newspapers and magazines are notoriously difficult to monetise, with advertisers reluctant to pay a reasonable rate for digital adverts. The problem is, that it is as time consuming and labour intensive to maintain a website as it is to produce a magazine and what's more, it also tends to detract from the main title too. After all, if everyone can freely access the news as it breaks, plus most of the features, what incentive is there to read the printed article?

In an effort to solve this conundrum The Times broke ranks in 2010 when, in the face of widespread derision, it introduced a pay wall for its website. True the site lost over four million readers virtually overnight, but it gradually gained over 200,000 subscribers, each of whom pay around £6.00 per month for the privilege of accessing it. Following in its wake, The Financial Times has erected a pay wall too and now The Telegraph is also following suit.

The good news is that advertisers also seem to prefer a subscribed site, as its readers are likely to visit it more frequently, stay longer and scrutinise more of the content in order to get their full money's worth. As a result, The Times has recently reported that it is now achieving virtually the same rates for its digital advertising as for its printed adverts.

And over the last week or so there has been a further development. The Times has now rolled out a new design for its website (which is fairly minging, since you ask) but frankly, this is something of a red herring, because although change averse readers have flocked to record their dissatisfaction with various aesthetic and technical aspects of the site, the most important change has been overlooked. Under the cover of this new innovation, The Times has quietly announced that the site will no longer be a repository for rolling news. Although it will be updated three



times a day so that it can include anything of national importance or general interest, the new look site is really just an online version of each day's newspaper. What this means is that the resources that have previously been devoted to constantly feeding a content-hungry beast can now be diverted to providing good quality journalistic content for the newspaper instead. And somewhere there in lies a useful lesson for us all!

One area of marketing activity that never seems to lose its appeal is Sign & Digital UK, which will be returning to the NEC on 19th-20th of this month, when it will be fielding over 200 exhibitors, together with an extensive seminar programme. Our comprehensive exhibition preview, which begins on page 32, provides the low down on some of the new products that some of the leading industry manufacturers and suppliers will be introducing, together with news of all of the latest innovations that visitors can expect to find at the show. One such exhibitor will be Graphtec GB, who is also the subject of this month's Supplier Spotlight on pages 30/31.

If this month's cover intrigues you, you can discover more about its provenance on Page 10, while on pages 52 to 55, you'll find the BSGA Newsletter, which from now on will be regularly included within the magazine. Elsewhere you'll find all of our regular news pages, and this month, we finish off with Mark Godden questioning the power of Google on page 58.

We hope to see as many of you as possible at Sign & Digital UK, where we will be sharing Stand E68 with the BSGA. This I'm reliably informed, is conveniently located close to the toilets. I'm trying very hard not to take this too personally and am only hoping that a mass outbreak of incontinence will deliver heavy traffic to our door, so if you find yourself with a pressing need to take advantage of the facilities, then please make a quick pitstop with us first!

Val Hirst – Editor

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Octink enjoys a bumper year

Octink reports that the company's Build division has enjoyed its best year yet, since having completed seven marketing suites, its revenue was 35 percent more than originally projected.

Octink's Managing Director, Mike Freely explained: "Over the past few years we have really cemented our position in the marketing suite sector as we specialise in taking the pain away from the property developers and construction companies and handling everything from planning and consultation, through to design, development and decoration, to offer a complete turnkey solution. On top of this, we are also able to help dismantle and recycle the suites as well, thus providing that all important 'whole life' service."

Recent examples of projects that the company has completed include Keybridge House, which is one of the next wave of marketing suites that



form part of the on-going regeneration of Nine Elms and features an array of contrasting materials, textures and finishes that together create a truly unique design and visitor experience.

Another high profile project was the ground-floor marketing suite for The Madison, a 53 storey residential building near Canary Wharf, which included a reception area, meeting room, drinks area, soft seating area, interactive models, and a sales zone for up to six sales staff, as well as a one bedroom apartment on the first



floor. The project was completed in just 12 weeks, inclusive of a three-week stripping out process, rendering of the entire front façade,

along with the installation of curtain walling, and a stepped and balustraded front entrance. ■

The Print Show unveils new online portal

Link Exhibitions, the organiser of The Print Show is developing and launching a brand new online information portal along with its initial floorplan.

Scheduled to take place once again at Birmingham's NEC in on October 11th to 13th, the exhibition has already attracted a number of key participants, including 80 percent of the companies that took part in last October's inaugural event, such as Grafityp, Intelligent Finishing Solutions, Konica Minolta, Riso, and Vivid Laminating Systems, while other recent signings are listed as Antalis, Presstek, and Premier Paper Group.

Chris Davies, The Print Show's Event Director, commented "The warm response that the launch show received, together with the level of success that the first time exhibitors enjoyed, has definitely driven the bookings for 2016, and we are much further ahead than we were at this time last year. As a result, we are also expanding the show and anticipate that it will be between 15 and 20 percent larger than previously."

In response to the interest in the event from across the commercial print spectrum, The Print Show's technology team has designed a new, mobile-friendly information



hub that offers both exhibitors and visitors access to a host of information that will help them make the most out of their time at the event. While some features, such as the new design and layout will be obvious to first-time visitors, those that return more than once

will also notice further changes, including a new colour scheme and theme that changes over multiple visits.

For further information visit: www.theprintshow.co.uk. ■

news

Appointments



Avery Dennison Corporation has appointed **Hassan Rmaile** as the Global Vice President of R&D for its Materials Group, effective immediately.

Rmaile is joining Avery Dennison from the Minnesota-based H.B. Fuller Company, a global industrial adhesives manufacturer, where he served as Vice President, Chief Technology and Innovation officer. He replaces Sjaak Elmendorp, who will be retiring from the company after 22 years of valued service.

As global VP for R&D, Rmaile will oversee the Materials Group's extensive global R&D network and focus on identifying new, disruptive applications while continuing to grow the performance and cost attractiveness of the core business.



Durst UK has appointed **Simon Casajuana** to head sales for the south of England.

A technical sales professional who has been associated with the printing and allied industries for more than 30 years, Simon will be responsible for developing new business and servicing Durst's existing clients.



Zeta Specialist Lighting has created a further six new jobs at its Bicester-based head office.

The new appointments include **Gokhan Budan**, who will be joining the company's in-house design team as Electronic Design Engineer, in a role that will help to accelerate the launch of a number of new innovations, including a more advanced version of Zeta's patented Energy Management System for solar-powered lighting solutions. Three new production operatives have also joined Gokhan

Other key positions include the

appointment of **Nigel Rutherford** as Sales Manager, who becomes responsible for accelerating growth within local government and the highways sector for Zeta's SmartScape range of street and area lighting products and road sign lighting solutions, and **Sam Shadbolt** who joins the company as Supply Chain Manager.



To further support its investment in a new distribution centre last autumn, **PPB** has made a number of strategic appointments:

Steve Skinner is the new manager of its London branch, having previously spent 25 years with Robert Horne/PaperlinX in a similar position and location.

Tom Ponton, who also previously worked for PaperlinX as an account manager, now covers the increasing portfolio of PPB products and has already secured a number of new clients.

Sarah Janes, ex Managing Director of Suhl Paper and more recently Neschen, has joined the team to bolster PPB's wide format digital media sales and support the recently launched Westland Digital Portfolio.

Keith Muston is the Warehouse Manager, who is in charge of ensuring the smooth running of the London logistics.



SloanLED has appointed **Ervin L. Cash** as President, Chief Executive Officer, and member of the Board of Directors. He brings 27 plus years of strategic, international business growth acumen to the role, having previously served as CEO for AERCO International and Bosch Thermotechnology. ■

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Antalis gets down and dirty



During March, 14 members of the Antalis marketing team embarked on a five kilometre mud run, known as the Suffering Race, at Rockingham Castle in Leicestershire, in order to raise funds for the Northampton-based Cynthia Spencer Hospice.

The Antalis team has so far raised almost £1300 to aid the tremendous work of the Hospice, most recently in support of Duncan Webster, the company's Technical Services Manager and his wife Julie, who recently lost her battle with cancer.

Commenting on the event, Cassie Booth, Marketing Manager at Antalis said: "The



name "Suffering Race" really does say it all, particularly as it turned out to be almost 10k! However, we pushed on through the pain, mud and freezing water and supported each other along the treacherous journey, keeping in mind the great cause we were supporting."

To read more of Julie's story and/or to donate, visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/AntalisMudRun> ■

A Dubai delight

When accounts all-rounder Sarah Norton celebrated 25 years of service at Wrights Plastics, the company rewarded her longevity in a novel way – by helping her to realise a long held dream family holiday in Dubai!



Sarah, who first joined the display and signage company at its former Willenhall premises on the 18th May 1990, having previously been made redundant by the former occupant of the building taken over by Wrights Plastics, remained with it when it

moved to larger premises in West Bromwich in 1997, and has been there ever since.

She cites the company's family friendly atmosphere, which has helped her to keep working whilst also raising her family, as the reason that she has remained such a loyal employee, remembering: "I was interviewed on a Thursday and started work the next day, although I never dreamed that I would still be here 25 years later!"

As well as its relocation to a bigger headquarters, Sarah has seen Wrights

showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2016

Sign & Digital UK

19th-21st April

Halls 17 & 18 The NEC, Birmingham
Organiser: Faversham House Group
www.signanddigitaluk.com

ISA 2016

20th-23rd April

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando
Organiser: International Sign Association
www.signexpo.org

DRUPA 2016

31st May-10th June

Messe, Dusseldorf
Organiser: DRUPA
www.drupa.com

Viscom Paris 2016

6th-8th September

Port de Versailles Pavillon 7.1
Organiser: Reedexpo France
<http://www.viscom-paris.com>

The Print Show 2016

11th-13th October

NEC, Birmingham
Organiser: Link Exhibitions
www.theprintshow.co.uk

If you would like your event to feature on this page, please send full information via e-mail to Val Hirst at signdirections@btconnect.com

Plastics more than double in size with a commensurate increase in the number of staff. When she started with the company she was solely responsible for most finance-related areas, but today, Sarah heads up a team of four. Se said: "In some ways, I miss the closeness of the early days, but the company's growth has been brilliant and its financial stability has ensured that it has survived many recessions and downturns – and I hope I have contributed to that."

When Sarah and husband Rob decided to start a family, Wrights Plastics set up a computer and phone at her home so she could keep on working and it is this level of flexibility that enabled her to carry on while also bringing up her son and daughter.

Sarah commented: "It's a family run

firm, so I think they understand the value of family life in a way that perhaps some other companies don't."

As recognition of her long service, MD Mike Wright and the team contributed towards a long planned holiday in Dubai. Sarah explains "Our son Sean wanted to go to Dubai for his 18th and by the time our plans came together I received a voucher from the company that meant the whole family could enjoy a very special holiday."

Wrights Plastics' MD Mike Wright added: "Amazingly, Sarah has worked with three generations of our family and has shown such dedication and commitment to the business that we were delighted that we could help her whole family to enjoy an unforgettable time together." ■

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Truman Brewery | North Kesteven Centre | Sheffield Museum's Millennium Gallery |
Muscle Mousse

new projects



▲ Artist **Arran Gregory** has created stunning leopard sculptures, using **Plaskolite acrylic mirror** from **Perspex Distribution**, for his recent solo exhibition 'HUNT' at London's iconic **Truman Brewery**.

Found in the Russian Far East and northern borders of China, the Amur Leopard is the world's most endangered big cat, with fewer than 60 still remaining in the wild and for the 'HUNT' exhibition, Arran Gregory created a life sized installation depicting a third of those remaining.

The project, which perfectly illustrates the incredible fabrication possibilities of Plaskolite, was painstakingly designed by Arran using a unique geometric pattern and then handmade in his London studio.

Silver mirror was specified due to its protective, laser cuttable film and durable surface, but the design required precision cutting and Perspex fabricator **Inplas Fabrications**, which supplied the material, laser cut each piece of Plaskolite to the required accuracy. ■

▲ Users of the leisure facilities at **North Kesteven Centre** in North Hykeham, near Lincoln have been getting in a spin over new cycling-themed wallpaper.



The centre, which is currently undergoing a £3.6 million refurbishment and has been renamed ONE NK, has been bedecked with wall coverings featuring photographs taken by **Phil Crow**, the official photographer for the British Cycling National Road Championships that were held in

Lincolnshire last June and reproduced by **DoubleRed Print**, part of the Allen Signs group. The resultant imagery helps to create a very special and uniquely participatory atmosphere within the cycling studio. ■



▲ In yet another intricate project, **Signs Express (Sheffield)** worked with **Sheffield Museum's Millennium Gallery** to produce a beautiful installation using designs from popular textiles artist **Harriet Popham**.



Harriet, who studied Surface Pattern Design at Swansea College of Art, now works as an Interior Textile Designer and Illustrator and for this installation, she combined the architecture of Sheffield in bird silhouettes with

plants from Sheffield's Winter Garden and her floral designs have been transformed into an intricate piece of vinyl artwork that has been applied to the floor connecting the two John Ruskin Gallery Rooms.

The installation, entitled 'Birds



Buildings and Botany', measures 40 square metres and runs alongside the Museum's new exhibition: 'In the Making: Ruskin, Creativity and Craftsmanship'. The artwork took two members

of the Signs Express (Sheffield) team almost a day to install and the finish is quite spectacular, running along the centre of an entire corridor. ■

◀▲ Wrapped vehicles are more numerous now than at any time in the development of applied printed livery, but as a medium it still has the capacity to surprise, as in the case of **Ocean Signs'** work for **Muscle Mousse**.



Ocean Signs' Owen Harris and his team used Metamark MD-X and its mechanically matched laminate to produce a total wrap promoting Muscle Mousse, which reflects the influences of the product's packaging with very subtle fades toward the corners of the vehicle. Under the wrap, a dark paint scheme is completely obscured by the light blue print. Even the vehicle's roof plays its part in the design.

Wrapping that involves transitions in tones across panel junctions is widely acknowledged as being

very difficult to apply, but Ocean Signs' work demonstrates that it is an accomplished exponent of the art. It has also mastered the design aspect of the project too, creating a cohesive graphic that also seamlessly incorporates the vehicle's roof without it appearing to be an afterthought.

MetaWrap MD-X has exceeded itself in this wrap. With MD-Class resolution and a generous capacity for ink, the design's whole gamut is liberated. The



mechanically matched laminate adds pop and protection and makes application and handling much easier than it might be with traditional wrapping media.

The vehicle's role is partly merchandising, partly advertising.

It arguably extends the reach of the brand's PoS. Its also serves as a rolling testament for the attention to detail and application expertise applied by the Ocean Signs' team in fact, it could be said that if wrapping has a muscle itself, Ocean Signs just flexed it! ■

Supplier News

Metamark is inspiring Britain

When a business is centred on creative input and equally creative output, inspiration is a vital part of the flow of new ideas, products and services and materials company Metamark is no exception.

Much of what it brings to market is, the company says, a reflection of its customers' needs and is very often inspired by their pioneering efforts to take digital print and cut graphics into

new applications.



With that in mind, Metamark is inviting all of its customers to take a bow and share in a recent success, following the company's recognition by the London Stock Exchange as being among Britain's Most Inspiring Companies.

Commenting on this development, Paul French, Metamark's CEO said: "I'm particularly pleased that we have been recognised among lots of other companies as being a source of inspiration. We strive, through our products, to place a limitless gamut of creative possibilities before our customers and to put our customers and markets at the very centre of everything we do. It's working for us and, I'm often told, it's also working for our customers too. That being the

case, it is as much a recognition of what's currently going on in the sign and print sectors as it is of us."

Metamark is continuing its efforts to pioneer new applications and markets and has recently announced a major initiative to help its customers develop the niche for industrial, commercial and domestic décor with the launch of its DécorMark range of digitally printable materials. ■

The outlook is bright for PPB

PPB is looking forward to further growth and expansion in London and the Home Counties following its move into specifically designed new premises last autumn.

The new 13,000 sq. ft. distribution centre, which offers over 1200 pallet spaces and is serviced by four 26 tonne lorries, is located close to PPB's original southern base next to the M25, and thus ensures excellent transport links to central London and

the South East.

The company maintains very close stock control between its London and Leeds depots, with London maintaining good stocks of fast-moving items and a daily trunker arriving from the main Leeds warehouse early each morning to ensure that the lorries can be loaded for same day local deliveries. In addition, PPB offers an out of hours delivery service if required, with larger

accounts often benefitting from two to three deliveries per day, while a new agreement with TNT ensures that customers receiving the company's new Westland Digital Media products also receive their items promptly and efficiently.

Richard Proctor, PPB's Manager Director, commented: "This significant investment forms part of our ongoing strategy to refocus the company's direction and to develop from being a

paper and board stockist to a supplier of a wide ranging portfolio of both rigid and flexible substrates.

"We have invested heavily to provide the widest range of plastic, paper and board, display materials and finishing services for the screen and digital printing sectors and the acquisition of machinery and stock means that we can provide a high value service to sign, display and digital print companies." ■

A racy partnership

Hybrid Services has teamed up with the country's foremost motorsport engineering education establishment, Oxford Brookes University, in a partnership designed to take wide format print to a whole new audience.

As part of its increasing commitment to supporting young people in print, Hybrid has created the Mimaki Vehicle Wrap Lab, supplying a Mimaki wide format printer, cutting plotter and software package to the university. This partnership is intended to provide undergraduate race engineers destined for high profile roles in Formula 1 and other avenues in professional motorsport, with hands on experience, expert

tuition and a commercial understanding of vehicle wrapping, branding and liveries.

Also involved in the project are material supplier Metamark and expert vehicle wrapper Jason Price, whose employment within the Corbeau Seats Group provides the opportunity to provide design, wrapping and installation services for a vast array of clients within the motorsport industry.

The motorsport engineering students at Oxford Brookes take part in the global Formula Student series of races, with the vehicles used mimicking scaled down, single seater F1 models and featuring highly developed aero packages,



telemetry systems and cutting edge mechanical engineering.

Metamark is supplying a range of media for the project, including the new MD-X Cylinder cast film for use on the cars and the RU500 LayFlat rollup material for use within the Mimaki Vehicle Wrap Lab, together with wallpaper and digital frost etched window film and expert advice on additional opportunities



for display graphics.

Head of Mechanical Engineering and Mathematical Sciences at Oxford Brookes University, Professor Gareth Neighbour, commented: "The extensive training and support from Hybrid and its partners has enabled our teaching staff and technicians to get to grips with the technology and offer an exciting new component to our degree and masters courses that is providing our students with yet another useful skillset." ■

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Supplier News

3M launches Select partner programme

3M has launched the 3M Select partner programme for the printing and application of its vehicle wrapping films used in the UK and Ireland rail and commercial fleet transport markets.

3M Select is a global initiative that gives customers the assurance of dealing with a qualified partner, backed by certification and a comprehensive warranty. It has already been introduced in the USA, Canada, Germany and the Benelux countries.

3M Select partners are qualified according to 15 criteria that cover

equipment and quality of work. These include adherence to a 3M Code of Content, execution of a 3M Matched Component System (MCS) quality test and submission to an annual audit by 3M personnel. The 3M MSC warranty, widely regarded to be one of the most comprehensive available, covers all elements of a graphic, including film, ink, adhesive and protective coating, and ensures that each will perform to the required standard over an extended period, regardless of the prevailing environmental conditions.

In the UK and Ireland, 3M Select has two levels of accreditation: Platinum

and Gold. Currently, four companies have qualified as 3M Select Platinum Partners and seven as 3M Select Gold Partners.

Senior marketing executive at 3M Commercial Graphics, Pen Webley commented: "Global, national and regional businesses rely on 3M products to protect their brand identity and 3M shares this commitment. The 3M Select programme is a realisation of this objective and brand owners can approach a 3M Select partner with complete confidence. 3M Select is a long-term programme that will be a primary 3M marketing focus for the rail

and commercial fleet markets.

"For more than 40 years, 3M's vehicle wrapping products have consistently set the industry standard for quality, performance and value. 3M is recognised as an innovative leader in the supply of signage and graphic solutions that will not only withstand the fluctuating UK and Ireland weather conditions but also guarantee excellent image quality regardless of these." ■



Expansion for Sign+Digital

Sign+Digital Materials, which supplies sign and display materials to signmakers and digital print companies, has opened a new interactive creative centre in Antrim.

The creative centre offers the latest technology in large format printing, as well as providing a host of creative ideas that sign and print

companies can use for inspiration and to help them to win more business.

Commenting at the opening, Leo Maher, Managing Director of Sign + Digital Materials, which currently employs three staff at the new Creative Centre, said: "I am proud to be opening our second creative



centre in Antrim and bringing our knowledge and range to signmakers across Northern Ireland and Scotland. Building on our existing workforce of twenty eight, we see ourselves growing by another ten staff in the coming two years". ■

Wrights Plastics buys Mid West Displays

Wrights Plastics has completed the buy-out of display specialist Mid West Displays, a takeover that represents a major expansion for the West Midlands-based manufacturer.

First established in 1969, Wrights Plastics has a large bespoke retail display and signage arm that works with some of the UK's biggest retail brands, including Marks & Spencer, Selfridges and Tesco. With a turnover in excess of £10m, the company, which employs around 100 staff at its West Bromwich base, remains a family-owned and family-run business. Its GPX brand specialises in the manufacture of retail display and point of sale (POS) products.

Mid West Displays, which was formed in 2004 and is a leading manufacturer, supplier and installer of window and interior display products for the retail, property and exhibition sectors, employs around 40 people at its Shrewsbury HQ, where it also fabricates bespoke and off-the-shelf acrylic products. ■

Antalis launches new product guide

Antalis UK has launched a new 108-page guide to its full range of sign and display products, which features many new items. In a market that is constantly evolving, the guide, which is designed to assist customers to select substrates for different applications, includes every product offering, ranging from PVC and large format papers through to finishing products.

In addition, it presents visual representations of the possible

applications for each substrate, thus helping printers to identify how each product can be printed to obtain the best results, along with fire and slip ratings making it easier than ever to select the right material.

The guide includes familiar brands such as 3A, Drytac, Priplak and Orafol; the Antalis pan-European Coala range of large format digital media, plus an exciting range of wall-coverings from Graham & Brown, which showcase a variety of creative embossings and finishes.



Recently launched and also included within the guide is Dispa board, 3A's new 100 percent recyclable FSC board with a unique embossed core, that makes it rigid, sturdy and flat. ■

Roland is on the map

Roland DG has launched its Roland DG Roadmap, a new website that is designed to enable both current Roland DG users and potential clients to discover upcoming event listings.

The easy-to-use site, which enables individuals to locate the events that are geographically convenient for them and relevant to their specific business needs, is part of Roland DG's commitment to facilitate customer access to Roland DG technology demonstrations.

As well as being able to see the machines in action, Roland users will learn more about their products' capabilities and profit-driving

applications from experts, thus enabling them to plot a roadmap for business success.

Furthermore, the website offers users another platform to learn more about Roland DG's latest pioneering product releases, such as the recently released VersaUV LEF-300, SOLJET EJ-640 and Texart XT-640.

The Roland DG Roadmap events listed are broken into different categories, including wide format print and cut, UV printing, promotion, textile and sublimation and rapid prototyping and engraving.

Events which feature on the Roland DG Roadmap are not exclusive to



Roland DG, as the company has also invited its extensive authorised dealer network to list their own events on the website too.

It will also list Roland DG Academy

courses, with an integrated Roland DG Academy booking system, to ensure businesses and individuals working within the sign and print sectors can easily book onto any courses that are relevant to them. ■

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Equipment & Material

3M expands Envision range

3M has expanded the Envision range of high-performance non-PVC vehicle graphics films with the addition of Envision Print Film 48C.

This naturally versatile intermediate film will provide sign and print companies with an easy-to-apply and remove film that is 100 percent compatible with all of the popular printing technologies.

The non-PVC film combines excellent print quality with ease of application and removal for high-quality promotional graphics. Available in a

permanent or removable format, it has a high-tensile strength that resists tearing to facilitate faster and cleaner removal. It is also more tolerant than vinyl of higher temperatures during installation and removal.

This economical single film meets the fire certification for EN45545-2 (Rail) and EN13501-1 (Building). In addition to its vehicle wrapping capabilities, the film can be used for a wide range of applications, including indoor and outdoor signage, wall and glass graphics and POP displays.



3M Envision Print Film 48C can be selected with or without 3M Controltac Technology and Comply Adhesive. This enables repositioning of the film until perfect registration with the substrate is achieved due to the non-visible air-

release channels and ensures a smooth and bubble-free application. Enhanced scratch resistance and UV protection are provided by the compatible non-PVC Envision Gloss Over-laminate 8048G. ■

A perfect polish

Arlon's new Ultimate Premium Plus Chrome Series vehicle wrapping film can be used to provide added polish to the range of effects that wrappers can create with full or part wraps, accent work and detailing.

The first of these products, Silver Chrome 707, is now available from William Smith, with a further choice of colours coming soon.

The 100-micron cast film, which offers up to five years durability, is suitable for applications on flat, convex and concave surfaces, in channels and around rivets. In addition, Chrome Series features Arlon's unique Automotive-X airflow adhesive technology, which facilitates perfect adhesion and conformability and provides a very smooth and consistent finish, even on difficult surfaces.



Arlon Ultimate Performance Plus Silver Chrome 707 is available from William Smith ex-stock in full or part

rolls and same day despatch is offered on orders received up to 6.00pm. ■

Totally on trend



ASLAN has added ten fashionable matt colours to its Wallstick ASLAN CM 100 series, a low-reflective, highly opaque film that is ideal for use in all temporary, design-oriented applications.

The extended colour palette includes



two primary colours, plus a pale rose-pink and a mellow blue, together with more vivid shades, such as a bright peach, buttercup-yellow and a lilac grey, while the material's thickness of 100 µm, means that it is easy to apply and can be successfully used for large-surface applications and wall decals.



The special adhesive guarantees ease of removal from all smooth surfaces, without leaving unsightly residues and the film's flame-resistant DIN EN 13501-1 accreditation, means that it can be

safely used in all public areas.

It is available in rolls 50 metres long and 1.02 metres wide. ■

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Equipment & Material

New decorative options

Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions has launched a new Digital Wall Film portfolio, the MPI 8000 Wall Film series, which includes three new textured permanent wall vinyls that simulate the finishes of Canvas, Stone and Stucco.

Wall vinyl printing MPI 8000 films are digitally printable with solvent, eco/mild solvent, latex and UV



curable inks. Unprinted, the textured and non-textured wall graphic films are durable for up to four years.

With the option of the three textures with permanent adhesive and the non-textured with permanent adhesive, an Easy Apply option and a

removable adhesive, the MPI 8000 series films, which offer an extra thickness to aid ease of application and provide excellent opacity, can be used to create unique short- and longer-term decorative wall graphics. ■

Stunning and secure



Arken used the occasion of its participation in the recent Retail Design Expo to showcase its new Fablite, Magboard, Superlite and Move-it Lockable signage products for the first time.

Designed to complement its established Purelite LED lightbox products, Fablite is a new frameless, fabric lightbox that offers an outstanding spread of illumination, thus making it an ideal interior signage solution for retailers and brands seeking to deliver standout visual impact in-store.

The new UK-manufactured Magboard solution, is a practical and competitively priced magnetic A-board pavement sign that has already attracted the attention of a major UK grocery retailer, while the new Superlite is a freestanding six-sheet exterior lightbox that uses LED illumination. Available in single or double-sided variants, it can be powder-coated in any colour to match individual brand requirements.

Finally, Move-it Lockable is Arken's new 40x30 front-opening forecourt signage solution. Secure and moveable, it features an integral glazed panel within the display's door mechanism, together with a concealed lock for improved aesthetic appeal and added security. ■



Perfect PETs

PPB has launched a new range of industrial plastics, which includes Lumex G (PETG) and Lumex A (APET).

Lumex G, which is the newest brand of premium modified polyethylene terephthalates (PET-G) and can be used in conjunction with thermoforming and hot line bending applications, is FDA/BGA approved for use in direct food contact and medical applications. It is also flame retardant rated Class 1 and REACH and ROHS compliant and, with a strength 150

times stronger than that of glass, it is ideal for use as signage, POS displays, vending machine fronts, and vacuum-formed trays.

Unlike traditional clear PET-G grades, Lumex G also comes in a range of special finishes from stock, including Dense White, Gloss Black and Opal, which are especially suitable for use in retail and display applications.

Lumex A is a premium quality amorphous polyethylene terephthalate (APET) designed for use in cost effective flat and arched POS/POP and signage applications. It is 100 percent recyclable, thus making it a popular choice for use as drink and



cosmetic bottles. Lumex A is available in Anti-Glare and Opal finishes.

Both Lumex G and Lumex A are suitable for use with screen and UV digital flatbed printing technologies. ■

Choice galore

Two new additions to the VION graphic film range from William Smith offers signmakers an enhanced level of choice.

The new Series VP3000 three year monomeric calendered vinyl film comes with clear, solvent based pressure-sensitive adhesive and a high quality 140gsm double-sided PE coated liner that provides excellent stability during printing and handling. Series VP3000 is available in gloss white or gloss transparent options and is suitable for application to flat and slightly curved surfaces only, for short to

medium term promotional signage and short-term vehicle graphics.

Meanwhile, the already established Series VP5000 graphic film is now available in a new option with grey permanent adhesive featuring V-Flow air release technology for easier application.

In common with other products in the Series VP5000 range, this is a gloss white five-year polymeric calendered digital printing film with a high quality, clear white face that provides excellent printability. It has a heavy-duty 170gsm double-sided PE coated liner.

Series VP5000 with V-Flow is suitable for



application to flat and slightly curved surfaces only, for vehicle graphics, display graphics, internal and external signage and window graphics.

VION materials are available from William Smith ex-stock and with same day despatch provided on orders received up to 6.00pm. ■

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Protek comes of age

--A year after Complete CNC Solutions first debuted its Protek range of computerised routing and knife-cutting production systems, the company is now preparing to introduce both the 2016 version of the Unico TT system and its new stablemate, the Unico CNC at the forthcoming Sign & Digital UK exhibition, which will take place at the NEC on 19th-21st April.

According to Complete CNC's Managing Director, Julian Sage, the starting point for the Protek Unico TT was the finish and, it seems, that purchasers of the system, endorse that sentiment. Julian explained: "Everyone who has installed a machine is said to be turning out work that's beyond what was

traditionally thought possible for a router in terms of quality and scope. Indeed, at Sign and Digital, last year, the output from the system was routinely being confused with both flame-polished and laser-cut production and was even confused with a printer when dealing with printed production."

The Protek story fundamentally traces to solid engineering principles and mastery of the quality electronic control hardware, resulting in a stiff machine that is fast, without compromising on accuracy.

One of the systems' early adopters, Kaleidoscope Imaging, based in Birmingham, is using its Unico TT to speed up the production of high quality printed point of sale

materials. Cut, creased and scribed to very tight tolerances, the production is both practical and profitable thanks to its digital origination and there's capacity to spare, with the Unico TT's impressive routing performance on hand when required too.

Unlike lightweight print finishing systems, typically flatbed plotters, the Unico TT offers all of the features of a powerful router in addition to its print-finishing capability. Waste is evacuated effortlessly and material hold-down is reliable, while the machine's touch is delicate enough to deal with printed material and cut or otherwise process it to tight tolerances.

These capabilities add up to a

machine with considerable appeal in industries beyond signmaking. Among the system's users in the plastics fabrication sector, Tocana based in Dublin has a deep specialisation in industrial electronics and offers its clients a huge selection of output, ranging from membrane switches to insulators. In such environments, the ability of a Unico TT to deal with a wide range of resistant materials, whether for rapid prototyping or production, can't be overstated.

Among the Unico TT's users in the sign and display industry, Morgansconsult based in Cardiff, provides a turnkey branding service to its clientele. With requirements spanning the whole gamut of

Trident provides the key

The first UK installation of the recently launched hybrid AXYZ Trident integrated digital print finishing system has taken place at Hampshire-based Key2 Group.

Established in 2002, the company is a leading provider of plastic fabrication, signage, acrylic point-of-sale and large-format digital printing solutions for retail, commercial and industrial companies. Managing Director of Key2 Group, Mike Keating explained: "As a direct manufacturer, we can handle anything, from one-off projects and prototypes through to large-scale production runs and anything in between."

AXYZ International Vice President (Market Development), Robert Marshall commented: "Sign manufacturers are now venturing into new markets and digital print finishing specialists are being asked to work with a much wider range of both rigid and flexible materials. These invariably require longer,

wider and deeper routing/cutting capabilities that traditional routers would find difficult to provide. The AXYZ Trident is one of the most advanced and highly innovative combined routing, cutting and finishing systems currently available."

The Trident incorporates a triple-head configuration featuring a CNC routing spindle with oscillating and tangential knife-cutting units. These are interchangeable to enable the processing of frequently problematical thin materials, such as vinyl, cardboard and paper and thicker and heavier materials including aluminium and other non-ferrous metals, aluminium composites (ACM), acrylic and foamed boards.

By comparison with other AXYZ routers, the Trident, which is available in a range of different sizes, can increase manufacturing output by as much as 50 percent. It also features a narrower carriage that contributes to a 12 percent smaller



footprint. Most significantly, however, it obviates the need to invest in two separate machines to carry out all of the routing, creasing and cutting requirements of digital print finishing. The six-inch gantry clearance on the machine enables more efficient processing of thicker materials like foamed board, while the interchangeable cutting blades can be as long as 120mm to enable, harder, heavier and thicker materials to be processed. The machine can handle any length of material via the Trident's ability to increase the length of the standard processing



bed by increments of 600mm.

The machine installed at Key2 Group is a Trident 6010 model with a width of 2159mm and a length of 3048mm. To explain why the company chose this particular machine, Mike Keating said: "As an existing customer of AXYZ International, we were well aware of the versatility and scope of AXYZ routers. We chose the AXYZ Trident 6010 machine because it was quicker, cleaner and quieter than any previous generation of machine and could handle a much wider range of rigid and flexible materials. Due to the versatility of Trident, we are also able to venture into new markets like packaging." ■

signing production, the value of having total control over the complete process from initial design, through to delivery and installation, is well served. The Protek Unico TT's versatility is such that it can play a profitable part in any fast moving project and power its way through any project's output needs.

Complete CNC Solutions is now filling its demonstration diary with the names of interested companies that will be challenging the 2016 version of the Unico TT with their production needs, while also acquiring a taste of the productive versatility of the Unico CNC too. "Production challenges are nothing new," says Julian Sage, before adding: "The answers we're providing are though."

The Unico CNC, which will be shown at Sign and Digital UK cutting sheet aluminium, a signmaking staple, will

be turning heads with its exceptional quality, together with the speed and clinical cleanliness of the operation and the fact that what comes off the bed is ready to use without the need for further tedious and costly hand finishing procedures.

Complete CNC Solutions will be demonstrating the machine's capability and handing out both finished samples and materials for anyone who wants to compare its output with that produced elsewhere at the show.

The company is also confident of its position with the 2016 Unico TT. Julian Sage opines: "We're not just selling a new system here, we're selling an entirely new concept. Lots of companies are now looking into print finishing, but what we are suggesting is, that they should look



further than that and consider the bigger picture. A Protek Unico TT will do everything that a lightweight flatbed finishing system can do, but it won't run into a brick wall when more is asked of it. It's a top-flight print finishing system on the one hand, and one of the world's finest routers on the other. To put it plainly, it's two systems in one very affordable package."

Demonstrations of the Unico TT are available at Complete CNC Solutions' HQ and visitors are advised to plan for a full day's attendance so that they can properly appreciate every facet of the machine's capabilities

and leave armed with plenty of different samples and a full range of options.

The Protek line is fully covered by Complete CNC's CompleteCare package, which includes the provision of financing, the offer of grants if available, and full disclosure of what's required in terms of tooling and maintenance. Full training is also provided as part of a managed programme, along with installation and commissioning. ■

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Cutting costs at G4

The ever-increasing competitive nature of wide format print production is driving sign and print companies to investigate new opportunities and G4 Design & Print Solutions, is no exception.

Since its formation 35 years ago, the company has evolved from a repro print house to one that produces specialised signage, vehicle wrapping, POS, exhibitions, stationary and shopfitting and now it is moving up to the next level following its acquisition of a DYSS X7-1624C digital cutting table from AG/CAD

G4 prides itself on being something of an innovator having acquired the first 8ft by 4ft flatbed printer with a white ink option in the Hull region several years ago, which it has since complemented with a variety of printers from Konica, Epson and Canon, so when it visited the Sign & Digital UK exhibition in Birmingham last year, it was to find a cutting table to use in tandem with its printer portfolio.

Commenting on the purchasing decision, the company's Managing Director, Darren Jimmeson explained: "At that time we were having to finish the posters, banners and roll-ups we were producing by hand, and were also unable to manually cut complex shapes when we printed directly onto rigid substrates with any degree of consistent precision, which meant a lot of outsourcing, so we realised that we needed a cutting machine to enable us to further develop the business."



He continued: "We reviewed all of the cutters at the show and were particularly impressed by the attention to detail and depth of knowledge of the AG/CAD staff. In addition, the KASEMAKE CAD software also stood head and shoulders above anything else available, but it was the robust build quality, capability and flexibility of the DYSS X7 that really sealed the deal for us. Within days of installing the machine we used it to cut a POS job in less than an hour. Previously, this job would have taken a full eight hours of manual cutting and we still wouldn't have achieved anything like the edge quality and precision offered by the X7!"

Darren Jimmeson added that the company is also extensively using the KASEMAKE software, especially when quoting for work. He said: "It's great to have the ability to provide customers with a 3D mock-up in a PDF format that enables them to fully visualise their completed design, and the fact that we can now design and produce a printed sample with exceptional turnaround times is an added bonus. Existing customers love this new sample process, whilst new customers are very impressed when we present them with visual and physical samples and quotes that are far superior to those being pitched by competitors."

From a technical perspective, KASEMAKE has a database of over 700

different resizable cutter guides for leaflet holders, displays, boxes and much more, which is providing G4 with a real competitive edge.

Darren Jimmeson observed: "We receive artwork from customers and manufacture to specifications, but the dimensions do not always correlate correctly. However, KASEMAKE enables us to proof the customer's design, provide feedback, amend inaccuracies and ensure the finished product is 100 percent correct. This significantly reduces our design time, as we only have to alter one design parameter and KASEMAKE automatically adjusts all other dimensions to suit, thus eliminating the potential for costly design errors or miscalculations."

He admitted that before the installation of X7 he originally expected that it would work best with the company's OCE Arizona flatbed printer, but he reveals that it is its ability to cut acrylic, Dibond, foamex, polypropylene, B and E-flute board and corrugated board, as well as vinyl and posters, into complicated shapes and geometries that has really helped to expand G4's customer base, while also reducing lead times and eliminating outsourcing. From a commercial standpoint, he is confident the X7 will have a payback period of less than two years. This is based on an estimated saving of £45,000 in terms of the previous outsourced cutting and form making costs and the reduction in material wastage that has resulted from the use of the KASEMAKE software's nesting capability.

Darren concluded: "We are delighted with the DYSS machine, the KASEMAKE software and the support we have received from AG/CAD. The machine has helped us to cut our costs, while improving productivity and opening up new markets and we genuinely couldn't have asked for anything more!" ■



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Vivid makes it a double

Vivid Laminating Technologies' new Easymount Air Wide Format Laminator has won a Top Product Award in the United States.

The Wide-Format & Signage 2016 Readers' Choice Top Product Awards were announced on 1st April, with the Easymount taking the top award in the 'Finishing: Laminating Equipment' category.

"We're very proud to win a second award for our laminating systems in the U.S.," commented Export Manager Bruce Cozens, "especially as we were previously presented with the Top Product Award in respect of our Matrix OPP Laminating Systems – to receive two awards in just six months is incredible!"



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The Easymount Air's patented technology ensures that the laminating rollers are controlled by pneumatic air pressure, thus enabling users to mount and laminate with remarkable precision.

Bruce Cozens explained: "The top roller 'floats' down, which means that foam and fluted boards aren't crushed. When the rollers achieve the correct

substrate thickness, they can be locked into place to maintain the required gap, thus making board feeding faster and more accurate".

The award will be officially presented to Kevin Grabiec of Rock Hill Distribution, Vivid's Exclusive Distribution Partner for the Easymount in the U.S, at the forthcoming ISA International Sign Expo in Orlando. ■



Fujifilm launches new Acuity Select 20 series

Fujifilm has released the new Acuity Select 20 series as a replacement for the existing Acuity Advance Select series, which it claims, maintains all the advantages of the popular and highly successful Acuity UV flatbed printer, including near-photographic image quality, print speeds up to 33.6 square metres per hour, versatility and ease of use to produce a wide variety of

applications on a range of substrates up to 50.8mm thick.

The Acuity Select 20 series, includes the option of using light cyan and light magenta to further enhance print quality for those producing fine art or photographic images, while the addition of a pneumatic pin registration system delivers quick and easy media loading and an optional automated

printhead maintenance system further improves productivity. In addition, the latest UV lamp technology facilitates the printing of thinner, more sensitive media.

With the addition of light inks, the new series is available in three channel variations (four, six and eight channels) across eight new models and is available in both the standard (2.5 x 1.25m) and X2 (2.5 x 3.08m) print-bed sizes, each with a roll option. ■

Epson introduces the Control Dashboard

Following the recent launch of the SureColor SC-S Series of wide-format inkjet printers, Epson has introduced the Control Dashboard, a useful and innovative browser-based management and productivity application that helps operators' set-up and optimises print output parameters more quickly and easily than ever before.

Available exclusively for the SureColor SC-S80600, SC-S60600 and SC-S40600 printers, the Epson Control Dashboard acts as the 'nerve centre' for up to four print devices providing the interface to Epson's extensive and growing online database of media profiles.

Printing onto a new stock is as simple as selecting a media type and desired print settings within the Dashboard's intuitive user interface. The Dashboard then automatically downloads an all-inclusive EMX (Epson Media Extension) profile, containing ICC profile, print output parameters and print mode-specific data, such as optimised ink densities and half toning, and configures printer and RIP settings, with the result that even novice operators are able to produce the highest quality optimised output onto a wide range of media.

Currently, more than 200 different print media types are stored in the Dashboard database, and the software is available for both Windows and Mac OS X, as well as supporting mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. ■



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Mimaki presents the UJV55-320

Mimaki has introduced a brand-new 3.2m roll-to-roll inkjet printer, the Mimaki UJV55-320, which uses UV-curable ink, cured with a low-energy LED light array and is the ideal solution for servicing the growth in demand for grand format backlit graphics.

A versatile and affordable solution for sign and display applications, the UJV55-320 delivers speeds of up to 110sq m/h and print resolutions of up to 1,200dpi,



depending on the substrate used. It also features a seven-colour inkset, including white and light cyan/magenta that can be configured in a four-colour mode or six-colour set, plus white. Use of instant-curing LED UV ink technology results in output that is dry to the touch and immediately ready for finishing, thus significantly reducing production cycle times.



Mimaki's white ink facilitates the output of high quality, vibrant results on transparent and coloured media and three-layer, colour-white-colour printing, which is especially suitable for the production of applications such as window graphics and backlit day and night signs. Moreover, white-only printing can also be used to provide graphics with a stylish look or as a base on dark substrates.

Another distinctive feature of the UJV55-320 is the provision of an inline, post-

print LED lightbox that enables operators to check the print quality of backlit signage during the production run, reducing both time and wastage. It also features a twin roll printing capability, enabling two separate rolls of the same media to be printed at the same time. Media rolls in twin roll operation can range from 210 to 1,524mm in width, with the distance between the two rolls being automatically detected for faultless performance. ■

Roland takes the TrueVIS route

Roland DG Corporation has introduced the TrueVIS VG-640/540 64" and 54" printer/cutters, a new generation of advanced wide-format, eco-solvent inkjet printer/cutters released under the TrueVIS brand name.

The VG printer/cutters, which are the ideal tool for companies producing applications such as indoor and outdoor advertising, vehicle graphics, banners, posters and displays, labels and decals, packaging prototypes and apparel heat transfers, are equipped with four newly developed Roland DG FlexFire printheads that flexibly control the metallic plate

attached to the ink chamber, for a higher firing frequency. The FlexFire printheads also deliver precision droplet placement in three sizes, and an approximately 25 percent wider print pass compared to previous Roland DG models.

They also offer seven-colour (CMYK plus Light Cyan, Light Magenta and Light Black) or eight-colour (CMYK plus Light Cyan, Light Magenta and Light Black plus White) ink configurations. White ink provides excellent opacity for transparent window graphics, while Light Cyan, Light Magenta and Light Black offer smooth gradations, perfect skin tones and beautiful images.

The VG-640/540 uses the new TrueVIS INK



3M™ MCS™ Graphics



that comes in 500cc pouches and fits neatly into reusable cartridges, which slide into a hidden ink bay for clean operation and less waste. In dual CMYK configuration, up to one litre of ink can be loaded for each colour, which is ideal for high-volume production. TrueVIS ink is Greenguard and Greenguard Gold certified, thus further underlining Roland DG's dedication to producing environmentally friendly products.

Included with the VG Series is the new

Roland VersaWorks Dual RIP software, which features a new core engine that accurately interprets native PDFs, as well as legacy PostScript files, including files with transparencies. The precision cutting mechanism of the VG-640/540 is adopted from Roland DG's latest cutting advancements, facilitating reliable contour cutting of complex designs, and expanding the range of possible applications, such as cutting thick materials for laminated floor signs. ■

Mutoh and 3M get matched

Mutoh has announced that its high performance ValueJet 1638X and ValueJet 2638X printer models and Mutoh + 3M Universal Mild Solvent Inks have been added to the 3M MCS (Matched Component System) Warranty program for finished graphics. Application possibilities include fleet and vehicle graphics and indoor and outdoor signs.

Using the Mutoh ValueJet 1638X/2638X printer models, which offer high quality 720x720 dpi production print speeds

up to 29 m²/h (1638X) and 33 m²/h (2638X) and Mutoh + 3M Universal Mild Solvent inks in combination with qualified 3M products, 3M-certified graphics manufacturers will be able to provide warranties up to five years for various fleet and sign applications and up to eight years for indoor applications, with the full support of 3M as total solution provider.

Applicable to new ValueJet 1638X/2638X printers, the 3M MCS Warranty program will be

rolled out to graphics manufacturers having a Certificate of 3M MCS Warranty or intending to apply for the certificate. The 1638X/2638X ValueJet printers and Mutoh + 3M UMS inks are available

through Mutoh trained and certified resellers, while 3M media and overlaminates is offered through 3M and 3M authorised resellers. ■



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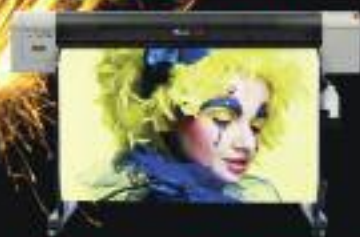
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Worthwhile Investments

Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use

The Dublin-based **IQ Group** recently added a **Mimaki JV300-160 and CG-160FXII** to its portfolio of printing hardware through authorised Mimaki reseller, **Reprocentre**, and the company is delighted with the investment.

A vibrant company in every sense of the word, the IQ Group, which prides itself on the production of vivid and high quality print, has grown significantly since it was first established five years ago and, when it recently decided to expand its hardware portfolio, it felt that the Mimaki JV300-160 solvent printer, was the machine that was most likely to justify its place in the company's print room.

A super-fast Mimaki solvent printer,

the JV300 uses SS21 solvent inks that are dispensed via a Mimaki bulk-ink system (MBIS) that enables IQ to maximise its productivity by running the printer overnight and unattended on long runs.

"Quality is key to IQ," explained one of the company's Directors, Gary Upton. "The Mimaki JV300 provides great print quality and continuity of colour every time, regardless of changes in temperature, thus enabling us to colour match perfectly. We're a reactive company that majors on offering its customers a fast turnaround, so the JV300 fits right in here, providing both the speed and flexibility we need - we've been really impressed!"

IQ, or Image Quest as it's formally



known, originally started out as a print management service and sign company, but quickly evolved to incorporate in-house print production, so that it could become more cost effective, while also offering its customers faster turnaround times together with a greater degree of security and confidentiality.

Gary continued: "We offer the complete workflow in-house, including everything from design through to installation and also do a vast amount of contract work, so it's vital that we are able to offer consistency on every level, including print output, which is exactly what the JV300 delivers." ■

Artworks, a design-led manufacturer of corporate branding products and services, together with digitally printed bespoke graphics and decorative solutions for the workplace, has recently installed an **Agfa Jeti Mira** flatbed six-colour plus white and primer UV-inkjet printer at one of its Bristol production facilities.

The company, which was established in 1997 and now boasts an annual turnover of £5 million that it plans to increase to £10 million over the next three years, employs a staff of 60 spread over three production sites in Bristol as well as its London office..

Whilst printed graphics is the mainstay of the company's business, it also offers a number of other services too, which is what differentiates it from other display companies. Artworks provides a total decorative graphics service which, apart from printing and finishing, includes framing, metalwork, plastic fabrication and joinery, together with a full installation service.

Commenting on the choice of the Jeti Mira, Jon Sulzmann, Artworks' Managing Director, explained: "We wanted a true flatbed wide-format printer, so we took our time and visited a number of manufacturers to compare the available options, but the Jeti Mira was the machine that ticked all of our boxes. Not only does it produce quality images on an extensive range of substrates, it was competitively priced and included Agfa's own finance package. Added to that we also felt very confident that we could rely on Agfa's service and support."

The true flatbed, which is available with a width of 2.69 metres and depth of either 3.2 or 1.6 metres, the Jeti Mira is a UV-inkjet printer that offers impressive print quality and productivity with a printing speed of up to 227 m²/hr. In addition, the roll-to-roll option provides for even greater versatility and facilitates printing onto a wide variety of flexible media.

The 7pl droplet size delivers industry-

leading quality, stunning detail and razor-sharp text, even when reproducing something as small as four-point type.

Other notable features include a moving gantry for printing on x- and y-axes with pinpoint precision and the 'Print & Prepare' technology that enables new media to be loaded while the printer is still operating.

Artworks Solutions prints on a wide variety of materials, including glass, metal, wood, fabric, vinyl and board and undertakes the production of challenging projects for clients that include the BBC, Balfour Beatty, Jaguar, Liverpool Football Club, Imperial Tobacco and Regus, as well as a host of major architects and developers, all of which rely on it to come up with innovative visual solutions.

For example, it may be called upon to print on a fabric wall covering that is required to be a pinboard in one area and magnetic in another. It may also need to print onto glass that is backlit



in some areas and magnetic in others. These challenges are ongoing, which places increasing demands on its expertise as well as the machines that it uses.

Jon Sulzmann continued: "We have had problems with previous printers and our exacting requirements have caused Agfa a few headaches too, but, to be fair, we are very happy with the Jeti Mira and Agfa's service and support has been excellent. In a business such as ours, we need suppliers that can work with us as partners and this is where Agfa makes a real difference." ■

Cheshire-based printer, **Print On** has stepped up a gear in recent months following its move to impressive new 6,000 sq. ft. premises in Cheadle, which includes a slick reception area with meeting rooms and a pin-neat open-plan print hall.



With a core staff of just eight people, it's obvious that efficiency is the name of the game, with each member of the team having clear focus and direction, whilst also being more than capable of multi-tasking. And this includes the directors of this family business who are remarkably hands-on. As Managing Director, Alex Oldfield explained: "We're a tight-knit family and I receive amazing support from my father and mother in their respective roles of Marketing Director and Financial Director. More importantly, none of us shy away from getting our hands dirty – we take a real pride in what we do and get involved in every aspect of the operation."



refitting the premises to meet our specific requirements, which included establishing a dedicated wide-format area in a separate part of the building to house the array of new Mimaki kit."

The company's impressive premises suggest that the business is prospering in what many still consider to be a challenging economy, so how has Print On managed to develop so successfully? Keith Oldfield explained: "We've always believed our two key assets to be our staff and the equipment we use and there's been no shortage of investment in either."

The team's wide-format specialist, Matt Peters added: "I've previously worked with other wide-format flatbeds, which I'd always felt to be perfectly adequate, but the more I use the Mimaki machines, the more impressed I am with their performance. The print quality and the speed just blows me away! We hardly ever need to use the highest quality setting on the JFX200, as even in fast production mode the quality is really quite exceptional. I'm regularly printing 8' x 4' rigid boards with full ink coverage in around 20 minutes, at a highly acceptable quality."

Print On traditionally based much of its production capability around its four Xerox Versant digital printers, but became increasingly aware that the ability to offer a more diverse range of print services was crucial if it wanted to retain existing customers and develop new revenue streams.

As for the JV300s, Matt enthusiastically describes them as "real workhorses and ultra-reliable." These two machines have obviously been earning their keep is evidenced by the fact that under the ink cartridge re-cycling scheme operated by Hybrid Services, Mimaki's UK and Ireland distributor, over 400 empty 440ml solvent ink cartridges have been re-cycled by Print On in less than 12 months!

Alex continued: "Some of our larger retail customers were placing their POS and other wide format print requirements with other providers, so the investment in a **Mimaki JFX200** flatbed and a brace of **Mimaki JV300** production solvent printers, sourced via our long-standing relationship with Mimaki reseller **Granthams of Preston**, really enabled us to extend our service portfolio."

The large printed sign in the press hall, which bears the words of the great Muhammad Ali, neatly sums up the company's ethos: "Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is Nothing." Clearly the small and enthusiastic team at Print On is more than up for a challenge now that it is armed with the confidence that new equipment and premises has provided! ■

Alex cites the subsequent significant increase in business as the catalyst for the company's move in January of this year. He said: "We spent a couple of months at the end of last year decorating and

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Cut out for profit

Since 1961, Graphtec GB has been supplying highly innovative, high-performance flatbed plotter/cutters and scanners to the sign and digital print sectors from its distribution facility in Wrexham, using a network of authorised resellers. It is fair to state, therefore, that the company has been at the forefront of cutting technology in the UK and Ireland since the outset, during which time it has achieved some notable industry 'firsts' for product innovation. Mike Connolly reports on the background to this industry stalwart, the progress it has made and the technically advanced solutions it has brought to market over the years.



Graphtec Corporation in Yokohama, Japan manufactures the plotter/cutters and associated imaging systems supplied by Graphtec GB. Established in 1949, it has evolved rapidly to become a global leader in the development of computer input and output devices, including a range of technically advanced plotter/cutters, with subsidiary companies based in the USA, Europe and Asia. The UK and Ireland is home to one of the most successful authorised distributors of Graphtec plotter/cutters and scanners outside of Japan.

Among the many tangible benefits attached to ownership of a Graphtec plotter/cutter is the extent to which it will enable sign and print companies to engage with new markets as diverse as the printwear and promotional products, packaging design and even the stationery and stone masonry



Graphtec GB Director, Phil Kneale

two-and three-person operations, moving conspicuously into the printwear and promotional products sector on the basis that 90 percent of the equipment installed for core manufacturing activities can be adapted, with little or no additional investment, thus providing easy access to this potentially lucrative market place."

Graphtec GB, with its range of high-

performance and relatively low-cost plotter/cutters, has often been the first port of call for sign and graphics manufacturers wishing to diversify and expand in this way. For example, with the addition only of an inexpensive heat press and desktop printer, working in conjunction with a Graphtec plotter/cutter, a host of exciting new business opportunities can be readily accessed.

Key products in the Graphtec GB portfolio of flatbed plotter/cutters and scanners are the CE6000, including the latest CE6000-120AMO, the flagship FC8600, the FC2250 and the FC4500 series of plotter/cutters, together with the CSX500 series of scanners. All of the plotter/cutters incorporate the fifth generation of Graphtec's proprietary ARMS (Advanced Registration Mark Sensing) system that provides unparalleled media plotting and cutting

accuracy via the use of four, rather than traditional three-point media registration. It also guarantees ultimate cutting precision on fine and frequently problematical materials, in addition to a host of commonly used sign and graphics and digital printing substrates. Described as the 'fastest in class' plotter/cutter currently available on the market, the recently upgraded FC8600 machine has a maximum cut area of 1,662mm (width) x 50m (length), a maximum speed of 1,485mm/sec and an enhanced 600gf cutting force. In addition to the ARMS function, the FC8600 also incorporates the latest ISM (Intelligent Scan Mode) facility that speeds up registration mark detection. This particular plotter/cutter is best suited to work undertaken by companies with higher than average production requirements.



A popular choice for those seeking a cutting solution that provides a high performance to cost ratio, the CE6000 series of plotter/cutters offers an increased cutting speed of up to 900mm/sec and a maximum cutting force of 500gf. The machines are supplied bundled with a free Graphtec Studio design and production software program that offers EPS support for compatibility with other popular software programs, including Adobe Illustrator and CorelDRAW. In common with the FC8000 series of machines, the CE6000 series incorporates both the ARMS and ISM facilities, in addition to a number of other machine enhancements. These include an improved initial downforce, new perforation cut and auto panning functions and both normal and advanced operation modes.

Complementing the FC8600 and CE6000 series are the eight inch-wide Silhouette Portrait and 12 inch-wide Cameo desktop plotter/cutters. The Silhouette Portrait is an ideal plug-and-play entry-level solution that requires only a USB cable linked to a standard PC or Mac. The Silhouette Cameo now has a number of improved design features and is supplied bundled with the latest Pro version of the Silhouette Studio design and production software. Both machines are available with a wide range of consumables, including various fabrics and textiles and the rhinestone template materials used primarily for applications in the printwear and promotional products, soft signage and craft and hobby markets.

Making its show debut at this year's Sign & Digital UK exhibition is a new addition

to the Graphtec GB portfolio, the i-mark Automatic Digital Die Cutter, which has been developed by the Italian manufacturer Colore Digitale. The system is based on the Graphtec CE6000-40 machine and i-mark software and can be used for high-speed die-cutting applications. One of its unique features is the fact that, contingent upon the thickness and rigidity of the sheets of material being processed, it will handle up to 120 sheets at a time, with the ability to add further sheets while the machine is still running. This is a capability that Graphtec GB considers sets the new die-cutter apart from any other comparable sheet-fed system.

In addition to the range of Graphtec plotter/cutters and scanners and their dedicated software solutions, Graphtec GB is also a preferred UK partner for global software specialist SA International (SAI). In particular, the company supplies the entire family of Flexi all-in-one signmaking software packages that comprise the FlexiSIGN, FlexiPRINT, FlexiSIGN & Print and FlexiDESIGNER modules. The Flexi range of software is now available on an attractively priced monthly subscription, which eliminates the need for a hefty up-front payment and allows subscribers free access to all future software upgrades.

The latest and radically upgraded Flexi 12 software program adds a host of new design and production capabilities to existing Flexi offerings. These include the Contour Cut True Nesting Tool that enables savings of up to 50 percent on material wastage and the improved Colour Management Tool that facilitates easier and more efficient printing with

metallic and white inks.

These advanced features have been supplemented with the latest Artwork Approval Tool that assists and simplifies artwork changes in addition to the Cut Order and Animated Cut Viewer Tools that reduce otherwise time-consuming cutting requirements. They also enable users of the software to see how a particular design will be cut before the start of the cutting process.

Other production tool enhancements include Banner and Canvas Finishing, an Auto Serialisation facility that saves production time and ensures greater accuracy and QR and Data Matrix Code Generation that makes it faster and easier to add interactive elements to images. Collectively, these additional production tools have greatly enhanced and streamlined workflow capabilities on key issues such as artwork management and approval, printing fidelity and cutting accuracy, colour management and end product finishing.



Reinforcing Graphtec GB's ability to open up new market opportunities for sign and graphics and digital printing companies have been a number of testimonials from satisfied customers. Typical of these have been those from the printwear and promotional products market to which many sign and graphics and digital printing companies have now migrated.

David Parr at Stafford-based Big Mouth Clothing commented: "The speed and accuracy of the Graphtec FC8600-130 plotter/cutter not only significantly increased our productivity levels, but also enabled us to expand the range of clothing we can now decorate. Working in tandem with a Seiko W-54 printer and using our preferred Tattoo vinyl media, we can now decorate a broader range of



garments and, in particular, those that require decorative effects based on small and intricate designs that were previously impossible to produce."

At Mid-Glamorgan-based CC Sports, where a Graphtec CE6000-60 supplied by Graphtec GB reseller TheMagicTouch has been installed, graphic designer and primary user of the machine, Gareth Evans commented: "The Graphtec cutter is very fast and yet remarkably quiet in operation. It has provided a number of powerful design features and helped increase our production levels."

Jim Nicol, owner of TheMagicTouch, considered the CE6000-60 to be 'best in class'.

On a further recommendation by TheMagicTouch, North Kent-based Ideas Unlimited installed a Graphtec CE5000 cutter. Proprietor Pete Sparrow commented: "The Graphtec cutter has performed faultlessly under the most demanding conditions. It is a true workhorse solution offering problem-free uninterrupted running, with zero breakdown and maintenance requirements that enable us to turnaround work much quicker, whilst enhancing our reputation as a reliable supplier."

These examples are just a few of the many customer referrals that demonstrate how plotter/cutters supplied by Graphtec GB can help companies to maximise the golden business opportunities that exist in new markets beyond the primary sign and graphics and digital printing sectors. For sign and print companies yet to exploit these new market opportunities, now would be the time to do so. And where better to start than arranging a consultation with a member of the Graphtec GB team or one of its authorised resellers! ■



Ready steady show!

Focusing on the theme 'Creativity, Innovation and Choice', Sign & Digital UK 2016 returns to Halls 17 and 18 at Birmingham's NEC on 19th-21st April with a raft of exciting new features that are designed to ensure that visitors gain maximum benefits from their attendance

Ten per cent bigger than last year's show, this year's exhibition will field more than 200 of the industry's biggest name suppliers, together with an extensive free-to-attend seminar programme, live product demonstrations, exhibitor trails and practical workshops.

Visitors are also encouraged to use the online meeting booking facility, which will help them to schedule appointments with exhibitors throughout the duration of the show.

To help visitors make the most of their time at Sign & Digital UK, a series of show trails will help to guide them around the show floor, highlighting products and services of particular interest.

Exhibition Trails

Returning for the third year, the **Textile Trail** will highlight everything that companies aiming to capitalise on the increasing popularity of textile-based printing will need to take advantage of the new revenue streams that come with the production of items, such as printed homeware, soft furnishings, soft signage, garment décor, interior décor and more.

The **Retail Route** highlights the exhibitors and show features that will interest those serving the retail sector, including exhibitors showing the latest display innovations, plus new solutions for the production of POP and POS materials, pop up retail units and interior décor.

The **Materials World Trail** will offer visitors the chance to catch-up on all of the most recent development that have taken place in the world of substrates and learn more about the wide range of application and output opportunities now available.

New product launches

Sign & Digital UK has long served as a launch pad for new products and this year is no exception. The new hardware on offer will include **Agfa Graphics'** new **Jeti Mira**, and a host of new **Mutoh** printers, including the company's first ever direct to garment printer, which will take pride of place on the **Colourgen** stand. Other new UK printer launches will include **Epson's** latest range of professional

SureColour printers and, on the **Hybrid Services** stand, visitors will be able to see the latest generation of **Mimaki** hardware, including two new LED UV printers, while **Roland** will be using the show to debut the latest additions to its **VersaUV series** and its new **TrueVis VG** range.

New cutting equipment on display will include **Biesse's** new **Rover J** router, and **Protek's** latest **Unico CNC** and **Unico TT** routers on the **Complete CNC Solutions** stand, while **AXYZ** will be introducing its latest **AXYZ Trident 6010**.

The full exhibitor list can be found online at <http://www.signuk.com/find-exhibitors/>, while our own 18-page round-up begins overleaf ■

The Seminar and Workshop Programmes

This year visitors will be able to enjoy no fewer than five educational theatres and workshops featuring 35 daily seminars.



The **Business Theatre** will feature sessions detailing how sign and print companies can develop and grow their businesses, as well as practical tips from expert speakers. A new feature for this year's line-up will be a series of in-depth case studies that draw on the presenters' practical industry experience in the fields of interior wall décor, wayfinding and directional signage.

Other highlights of the programme will include 'Sign Maintenance & Planning Regulations', presented by **David Catanach** of the **BSGA**, which will cover a summary of planning changes, developments on sign maintenance and codes of practice, the 'Do and Don'ts of Colour Management', presented by **Jan Edgcombe** and **Giles Bristow** of **Antalis**, 'Capitalising on a changing digital market' by **Nick Kirby** of **Swanline Print**, 'Looking after your wide format eco-solvent machine' by **Mike Kryvoblocki** from **Roland** and 'HP Wall Art Suite' by **Rayna Raychoudhury** of **Hewlett-Packard**.



For full details of the **Business Theatre** sessions visit: <http://www.signuk.com/business-theatre-seminar-programme/>

Hosted by **Terry Steeley**, the **Adobe Theatre** is back with daily sessions using the latest editions of the Adobe software. They will include 'Knowledge is power — Adobe InDesign CC', essential for those looking to create sophisticated page layouts for print or digital distribution, while for anyone wishing to learn more about colour setting tips, the 'Stop wasting time and take control of colour with Adobe Creative Suite' session is a must-attend.

For full details of the **Adobe Theatre** sessions visit: <http://www.signuk.com/free-seminars-workshops/adobe-theatre-timetable/>



The show will also see the return of that other evergreen favourite, the **Corel Theatre**. The daily sessions are especially designed for those operating within the sign and sign garment personalisation sectors, and will provide updates and advice on all of the Corel software's latest attributes, as epitomised in the 'CorelDRAWGraphics Suite — An overview of new features' opening session.

For full details of the **Corel Theatre** visit: <http://www.signuk.com/free-seminarsworkshops/corel-theatre-seminar-timetable/>

CADlink will present a series of seminars in the **SignLab Theatre**,

focusing on the best practice print and cut, sign and display design and production workflows. Sessions will include the self-explanatory 'Introduction to SignLab' and 'SignLab v10: Faster. Easier. More Powerful' session, which will provide a useful review of the key features in the long awaited, upcoming release of SignLab v10.

For full details on the **SignLab Theatre** visit: <http://www.signuk.com/free-seminars-workshops/signlab-theatre-seminar-programme/>

The **Signmakers' Workshop** will be presented by expert sign maker **Paul Hughes** and offer visitors the opportunity to learn how to master some of the most in-demand signmaking skills and techniques. Sessions will include vinyl application, vehicle livery, the production of a signboard and, new for 2016, 'Wall and Floor Graphics'. There will also be daily Q&A sessions, providing visitors with an opportunity to ask questions and gain some hands-on experience at the techniques covered within the presentations.

For full details of the **Signmakers' Workshop** visit: <http://www.signuk.com/free-seminars-workshops/signmakers-workshop-programme/>

A new innovation for 2016 is **Wrapping Workshop** presented by **Sign and Digital Materials**. Throughout the day, visitors will be able to experience the artistry of two of the world's best vehicle wrappers, **Ole 'Sunshine' Solskin** and **Justin Pate**, who will be providing exclusive wrap training workshops. Visitors will be invited to learn the fundamentals of wrapping a vehicle bonnet, tinting the rear window, wrapping bumpers and wing mirrors, while also having an opportunity to get hands on and to



discuss the technical aspects of vehicle wrapping.

For full details of the demonstrations visit: www.signanddigitaluk.com/become-a-wrap-expert-workshop

Another new innovation this year is the **Digital Signage Seminar Theatre**, where visitors can learn what digital signage means for the industry and how it can be used to successfully complement traditional signage and become an integral part of mainstream signage projects.



Speakers will include **Richard Westhead** of **One Digital Solutions** whose session is entitled 'Increasing sales through successful digital signage', **Pedro Lindsey** of technology company **Beabloo** who will be presenting 'Digital Signage 3.0 and Big Data Analytics', and **Janice Fairfield** of **Fairfield Displays** who will advise 'How to specify the right screen for your client'

For full details on the **Digital Signage Seminar Theatre** visit: <http://www.signuk.com/digital-signage-theatre/> ■

The show will open from 10.00am to 5.00pm on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th April and from 10.00am to 4.30pm on Thursday 21st April
Sign & Digital UK is free to attend and registration is now open. Visit: <http://www.signanddigitaluk.com>

Printers

Be sure with Epson

On Stand K30, Epson will demonstrate three new 64-inch SureColor SC-S large-format printers, the 10-colour SC-S80600, the high-speed CMYK x 2 SC-S60600 and the four-colour SC-S40600 platforms, all of which use Epson's new UltraChrome GS3 ink set.

Also on display will be Epson's super-fast aqueous-based SureColor SC-P20000 printer. Key design features include Epson's new permanent PrecisionCore Micro TFP printhead and the UltraChrome Pro 10-colour ink set. For the digital textile printing sector, Epson will be demonstrating the SureColor SC-F9200 and SC-F6200 dye-sublimation printers.



Completing the Epson presence will be the 36-inch four-colour SureColor SC-T5200MFP large-

format printer with colour scanner and copy facility. ■

New Mimaki and MTEX solutions from Hybrid

As the exclusive UK and Ireland distributor for Mimaki, Hybrid Services (Stand E10) will be using the occasion of the show to introduce a host of new printers.

These will include the new Mimaki UJF-7151plus LED UV industrial-grade flatbed printer, which will be making its debut at the show, together with Mimaki's CJV150 range of printer/cutters.

A mid-format flatbed printer that features exceptionally detailed output coupled with low running costs, the UJF-7151 features a 710x510mm bed size and industrial construction to ensure high print

quality, which makes it especially appealing to screenprinters looking for a digital printing solution.

Also on display will be the MTEX

and cure dye-sublimation inks onto polyester in a single process.

However, the star of the stand is anticipated to be the new Mimaki UJV55-320 roll-to-roll LED UV printer, which created such a stir when it was recently debuted at FESPA Digital. Combining a retail price of £59,995.00 with a host of innovative features, such as the option to run two narrower rolls concurrently and an inline lightbox for checking the efficacy of backlit output in situ, it uses Mimaki's latest flexible LED UV inkset to produce banners, backlit and point of sale graphics up to 3.2 metres wide and can also process roll media up to 100kg in weight. In addition, the LED curing technology offers lower running costs. ■



Driving top-line growth with Roland technology

On Stand H30, Roland DG will be demonstrating its impressive range of digital printing solutions, while also providing an opportunity for print professionals to learn how they can drive top-line business growth using Roland's renowned technology and expertise.



One of the undoubted stand highlights will be the latest addition to the company's VersaUV series of UV LED flatbed inkjet printers, the LEF-300, which will be shown for the first time. Billed as Roland's largest, fastest and most productive desktop flatbed UV printer to date, its key design features include a 770mm-wide printing area, four printheads, two UV-LED lamps for fast bi-

directional direct printing, a vacuum table and Roland's VersaWorks Dual RIP software.

Also on show will be the new Texart XT-640 and SOLJET EJ-640 printers. The XT-640 is the latest addition to Roland DG's range of dye-sublimation printers, offering speeds of up to 63 square metres per hour.

The printer is particularly suited to more demanding production environments and is supported by compatible Texart inks that can be configured to accommodate both four- and eight-colour printing. The SOLJET EJ-640, which features dual staggered printheads and an integrated tri-heater system, is also designed for high-volume

production requirements.

In addition to the array of hardware on offer, visitors to the Roland DG stand will also be invited to enter a prize draw that will offer them the chance to win a variety of prizes including a SOLJET EJ-640 printer, ECO-SOL Max 3 inks and a place on the Roland Academy course. ■

New Mutoh printers from Colourgen

On Stand E40, Colourgen will introduce a new range of Mutoh printers, including a desktop flatbed model, plus laminators from Kala, RIPs from Caldera and a wide range of consumables.

ensuring precise media handling. Colourgen will also demonstrate Mutoh's first ever direct-to-garment printer, the VJ-405GT, as well as the 426UF and an A3+ LED UV printer designed for personalised products, labels and gadgets.

The Mutoh 64-inch twin-head ValueJet 1638X and single-head 1624 printers incorporate micro piezo head and DropMaster technologies, with the latter

Also on display will be Mutoh's print and cut solution, comprising a ValueJet printer and ValueCut cutter. ■



LED UV first for InkTec

InkTec will demonstrate the new JETRIX LX5 LED UV printer on Stand H20.

This more environmentally aware platform claims a 35 percent saving in power consumption by comparison

with a mercury lamp printer. In addition, warm-up time is eliminated, it generates less heat and provides an extended lamp life of up to 20,000 hours. The printer, which incorporates six Konica Minolta printheads and specially formulated InkTec UV inks,

has a printing speed of 39 square metres per hour in production mode and 11 square metres per hour when outputting precise fine art printing.

Visitors will also be able to see a demonstration of an entry-level 3.2 metre-wide roll-to-roll printer, as well as InkTec's range of solvent-based and dye-sublimation inks for use with the Mimaki JV300 platform. ■



Printers

A world of possibilities with CMYK



On Stand J10, CMYK will be demonstrating the capabilities of its wide range of printers using a combination of large video walls, while also providing an opportunity for visitors to engage with fitters working on live installations.

Videos will show projects being

carried out in conjunction with companies such as Hollywood Monster and fitters from independent partner Agile Installation.

In addition, the stand will incorporate a number of application walls featuring floor graphics applications and a giant



glass panel showing the new Clear Focus window graphics, along with the Saint Gobain optically clear glass-decorative films. Visitors will be invited to talk to and consult with representatives from CMYK and manufacturers such as EFI, Berger Textiles, MTEX and Hybrid Services and to see a range of well-

known digitally-printable materials being processed by six compatible printers, including the EFI VUTEK H1625 and H2000, the MTEX Blue entry-level direct-to-textile, the Mimaki JFX200 UV LED flatbed, the JV300 and the CJV 150-130 integrated printer/cutter platforms. ■

Papergraphics to take more than a stand

Wide-format print specialist, Papergraphics will occupy four especially themed stands (Stands D36, D60, J24 and L42).

On **Stand D60**, the company will demonstrate the CWT 1630 cutting table alongside the Summa D160 cutter and the

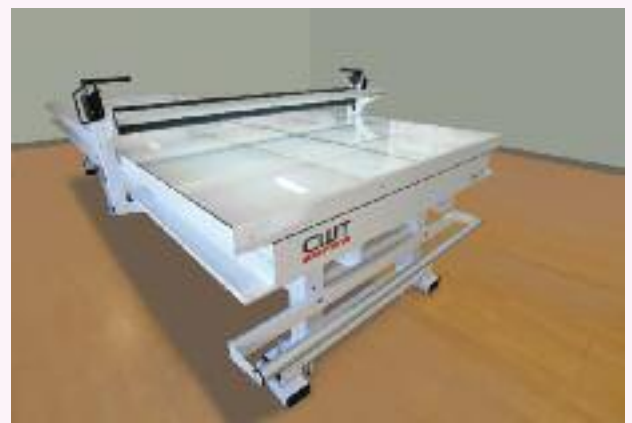
Easymount 1600SH laminator. Products to be shown on **Stand J24** will include the HP Latex 300 and Epson SureColor printers and TESAFLEX and StickyPrints media.

On the décor-themed **Stand L42**, Papergraphics will highlight the creative possibilities of the HP Latex 360 printer in the interior décor sector, in addition to

offering live demonstrations of the DigiMura wallcoverings range of media. Two yet to be announced new products for the interior retail and home décor markets will also be showcased.

Underpinning these three stands will be Papergraphics' primary base, 'The Knowledge Centre' (**Stand D36**). This will be hosted

by some of the company's most highly regarded experts and Onyx specialists who will be on hand to discuss how print businesses can perform to their highest potential using new hardware, software and media. The new Onyx Thrive version 12 workflow solution will also feature on this stand. ■





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Printers

A winning combination

On Stand J20, Nth Degree Imaging will show a range of inkjet printers, consumables and colour management solutions.

Printers on show will include an eight-colour Fujifilm Acuity 1600 II UV LED, the desktop Roland

VersaUV LEF-20 and the Roland TrueVIS VG-640 printer/cutter platforms. Other stand attractions will include a wide range of consumables from Fujifilm's Euromedia brand, the latest T-Flow production software and Valiani cutting tables. ■



i-Sub debuts four new solutions

i-Sub will be presenting a range of wide-format print, packaging, textile and finishing technology on Stand F10.

In particular, it will be debuting four new solutions, including the Dgen Hexa pigment printer, the Mimaki TS300P dye-sublimation printer, the Digi-Foil DF Pro semi-automatic foil applicator and the Zünd ARC (Automatic Router Bit Changer).

The company will also be offering a raft of substantial offers on all machines purchased at the show. ■



YPS offers new paths to profit

Your Print Specialists (YPS), the UK's only dedicated Mimaki vendor, will present a full range of graphic, textile and industrial print technologies on Stand E2, where it will be focusing on the routes to profitability.

The North East-based reseller invites visitors to consult its specialists about the specific applications they are looking to develop and to discover how they can do so with a rapid return on investment and a set-up that works in harmony with their existing work list.

YPS will demonstrate the broadest range of Mimaki equipment on offer at the show, including the Mimaki CJV150-130, a 1.36m integrated print-and-cut engine that offers the silver, orange, white and light black inks that will be of

particular interest to sign and print companies that service the retail and other high-quality markets. The popular engine offers speeds of up to 56.2sq m/hour, plus a top-of-the-line maintenance option that reduces total cost of ownership.

Meanwhile, the Mimaki UJF-7151plus, the larger update to the flatbed UJF range, places the production of high-margin direct-to-object print output within reach. This machine appeals to those expanding their profit centres with promotional materials, customer components, instrumentation and fine-gauge industrial work. With its six staggered heads, the UJF-7151plus provides superior image quality thanks to Mimaki's MAPS4 advanced pass system and MFD1 fine diffusion, which eliminate print noise while also printing at some



2.6 times the speed of previous models.

Textile printing will also feature strongly on the YPS stand, where visitors will be able to see the accessible Mimaki CJV150-75 platform printing in its dye-sublimation version, producing output that can be successfully used for the broad gamut of indoor and outdoor signs and graphics. The CJV150, which can be supplied

with a bulk ink system, will be paired with a Muratex Sublimation Calender, a high capacity, 1.8m roll-to-roll calender with accurate automatic controls for speed and heat, as well as manually adjustable fabric tensioning for handling a realm of different materials. The Muratex, for which YPS is the exclusive UK reseller, is also available in 2.0, 2.4 and 3.2m options. ■

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Printers

MTEX presents a speedier solution

MTEX will be showcasing the MTEX 5032HS Printer on Stand C10, one of the five new machines that it has launched during the past year.

Suitable for use with both pigment and disperse inks, the MTEX 5032HS is the ideal machine for the production of soft signage and interior décor and offers the same stunning print quality as the MTEX 5032Pro, but with the addition of added speed – it prints at 120sqm/hour in production mode.

Other new models from MTEX include the MTEX Blue K, which is available with pigment inks and is specially designed for use in conjunction with knitted, fully stretchable fabrics, including those that contain cotton or synthetic fibres, such as jersey, which can be used for applications in the home



textiles, interior design, and printwear and promotions sectors. MTEX Blue printers can also be seen in action on both the Hybrid and

CYMUK stands (Stands **E10** and **J10** respectively where they will be shown using dye sublimation inks. ■

Dye-sub to feature on Xpres stand

On Stand G36/38, Xpres will be conducting live demonstrations of xpres printers from Mimaki, Roland and Epson with new exclusive additions, with members of its experienced and knowledgeable team on hand to provide visitors with all of the information they need to make the most appropriate buying decisions.



There will also be a special focus on wide-format dye-sublimation printing, which that has become a huge growth area for sign and digital print areas where it can be successfully used for a wide selection of applications ranging from interior décor and soft signage, to personalised sports wear. ■

SMGG highlights PageWide

Stanford Marsh Group Graphics, the commercial graphics division of Stanford Marsh Group, will be focusing heavily on the very latest HP PageWide printers on Stand F22.

Taking pride of place on the stand will be the HP PageWide XL 8000 Printer, which enables purchasers to meet demand peaks with the ultimate in high-production speed in both monochrome and colour and at a benchmark cost per print. It is capable of printing technical drawings, GIS maps and point-of-sale (POS) posters at breakthrough speeds of up to 30 A1 pages per minute.



In addition, SMGG will be showcasing the HP Z5400 multi-roll printer for high-quality, long-lasting prints, and the compact HP Latex 310 printer that enables businesses to affordably expand into a versatile range of high-quality, durable indoor and outdoor applications. The entry-level Summa D60 Cutter will complement all of the printers on display.

Finally, SMGG will be using the show to launch SMGG media, its own brand of cost-effective media range, which is compatible with latex, eco-solvent, aqueous and UV curable printers. ■

Zone in on GPT



Graphics Printing Technologies (GPT) will return to the show for its eighth consecutive year on Stand E20, where it will be showing printers from Mimaki and HP and offering exciting show specials.

The stand will be divided into three special zones, with the Mimaki Zone showcasing the extensive range of Mimaki solvent and UV-Cure printers, including the UJF6042, JV-300 and CJV-150. The HP Zone will include HP's range of Latex and UV printers,

such as the HP Latex 360 and HP Scitex FB550.

Media from Intercoat, finishing equipment from Vivid Laminating and a Mimaki CGII cutter, will all feature within the Application Zone and representatives from manufacturers will be on hand to offer advice and demonstrations and to answer all visitor questions.

In addition, GPT will also be running regular daily demonstrations at 11am and 3pm on the stand. ■

Canon set to fire

On Stand H10, Canon will introduce the Oce Arizona 1280 GT UV flatbed printer.

In common with other printers in the 1200 series, it incorporates the award-winning Oce VariaDot imaging technology that guarantees sharp definition, smooth gradients and solid colours. Print quality can be further enhanced for photographic-quality and fine art applications by adding the optional light cyan and magenta inks.



The stand will also feature the company's bespoke Applications Gallery that illustrates the diverse capabilities of its printers, including the Oce ColorWave 700 model.

Canon will also be hosting Zund Plotting Systems and will demonstrate the G3 XL3200 CV digital cutter in combination with the new Prep Centre software. ■



Popular hardware options to be shown by printMAX



O n Stand K 1 0 ,

printMAX will show examples of the best-selling roll-to-roll printers, new products

from Roland and the increasingly popular LED-UV flatbed printers..

From the Mimaki stable, the company will show the entry-level print and cut CJV150, the CJV 300 and JV300 and the UJF-3042HG LED-UV platforms. Roland printers on

display will include the new TrueVIS VG-640 roll-to-roll, print and cut and direct-to-object platform and the VersaUV LEF-300. The print-only Roland SoJet EJ-640 will also be shown, alongside examples from the popular Versacamm series of printers. ■

Agfa Graphics showcases the Jeti Mira

Visitors to Stand F30, will be able to see the new Jeti Mira 2716 HS printer with Primer and RTR option, which will be making its UK debut, following its launch at FESPA Digital earlier this year.

This six-colour and white UV-inkjet true flatbed printing system with an optional varnish or primer, also features a dockable roll-to-roll system and will be shown processing output for use as posters, signage, exhibition graphics and POP displays, as well as niche applications, such as DVDs, printed wooden artefacts, art

reproductions, personalised objects and more.

The Jeti Mira is available in two models, the Jeti Mira MG 2716 (2.69 m x 1.6 m) and the Jeti Mira MG 2732 (2.69 m x 3.2 m), which are capable of print speeds up to 206 sqm per hour. Its sophisticated 'Print and Prepare' mode, a standard feature on both models, enables loading of media on one side of the table while the other side is still printing, thus significantly reducing downtime to ensure maximum productivity.

All Jeti Mira models can



accommodate a dockable roll-to-roll system that attaches directly in front of the flatbed table, while the design also enables the gantry to transport over the top of the unit to minimise wastage.

It is driven by Agfa Graphics' own Asanti workflow software, which takes control of the entire production process, including file handling, colour management and preflighting, maximising efficiency and reducing errors. ■

Cutting, Routing & Engraving

New Protek machines from Complete CNC

On Stand D30 Complete CNC Solutions will be launching new systems that reinforce its position as a premier UK supplier of production routers, and establishing a new systems category with a digital cutter that can also outperform most dedicated routing hardware.

A powerfully powered production routing platform from Protek, the Unico CNC, which is available in a range of sizes and also features a

range of accessories including a flatness sensor, camera and knives, will be making its debut at the show.

Also from Protek, and making its show debut, will be the 2016 Unico TT, which combines the virtues and capabilities of cutters used for print finishing and knife cutting, while also outperforming many dedicated routing systems. This fully featured machine, which combines productivity with precision, features powerful routing, knife cutting,

creasing, engraving and incising tools, a twin bay cutter with static and reciprocating steered knives and a powerful vacuum hold-down and extraction system.

Another stand attraction will be the Tekcel EXR production router, which will be shown cutting challenging materials and demonstrating just how productive it can be.

In addition, Complete CNC Solutions will also be discussing and demonstrating its range of cutting tools, which offer outstanding performance, exceptional life and great value for money. ■



Summa showcases print finishing

Summa will be demonstrating the productivity and staying power of its range of advanced cutting plotters on Stand D60.

Visitors will be able to see a comprehensive selection of Summa products ranging from the groundbreaking Summa F Series, to the entry level Summa D60, while also

having an opportunity to examine the wide range of cutting edge solutions available, with ongoing demonstrations and application experts on hand to answer any questions.

Summa will also feature on the Designjet.net stand (Stand G30) as part of a joint effort to enable visitors to see

Summa products being demonstrated by the country's leading resellers.

The joint stand G30 will be manned by ArtSystems, Designjet.net and Summa product specialists, providing a unique opportunity for visitors to have direct access to some of the best wide format application experts in Europe. ■



Graphtec GB is cutting it fine

On Stand D50, Graphtec GB will demonstrate the recently upgraded and higher-performance CE6000-120AMO, the flagship FC8600 and the latest FC2250 flatbed plotter/cutters.

All of the machines incorporate Graphtec's proprietary ARMS (Advanced Registration Mark Sensing) system that uses four-point rather than traditional three-point media registration for radically enhanced media plotting and cutting accuracy.

The CE6000 offers an increased cutting speed of up to 900mm/sec and a maximum cutting force of 500gf. It is supplied bundled with a free Graphtec Studio design and production software program that provides EPS support for compatibility with other popular software, including Adobe Illustrator and CorelDRAW.

The upgraded 'fastest in class' flagship FC8600 provides a maximum speed of 1,485mm/sec, a maximum processing area of 1,662mm (width) x 50m (length) and an enhanced cutting force of 600gf. It will cut media up to a thickness of one millimetre. In addition to the ARMS system, the FC8600 also features the latest ISM (Intelligent Scan Mode) facility that further enhances tracking and cutting accuracy on longer-length print and cut applications.

Graphtec GB is also likely to show the 12-inch Silhouette Cameo desktop plotter/cutter that is now supplied with the latest Pro version of the Silhouette Studio design and production software. The machine has a number of improved design features, including a new roller-feed system, and will process media up to a length of three metres.



Completing the Graphtec GB presence and in conjunction with global software specialist SA International will be the latest version 12 of the all-in-one FlexiSign sign-making software. Incorporating five different application-specific products, it is available on an attractively priced



subscription basis which avoids a hefty up-front payment and which covers free access to all future upgrades. ■

Digital finishing perfected by Esko

On Stand G12, Esko will demonstrate the Kongsberg C60 digital finishing system.

Part of the re-engineered Kongsberg C-Series of machines, the C60 incorporates Esko's composite carbon traverse beam to enable full production speed when processing large-format sheet and roll-fed materials without any loss of accuracy. Other key production tool enhancements include the i-cut Production Console (PC) that drives all functionality on the Kongsberg tables, as well as delivering operator guidance and precise machine control.



The i-cut Suite of pre-press and pre-production solutions will also be demonstrated, along with ArtiosCAD

and Studio design software for 3D applications and the Esko Automatic Engine that manages pre-press workflow automation. ■

Trotec ups the tempo

On Stand G50, Trotec will demonstrate the latest addition to the Speedy range of laser engravers, the Speedy 360. The machine has a processing bed area of 813 x 508mm and a speed of 3.55 metres per second.



A new feature of the engraver is a flexible front cover that improves accessibility to the laser and makes handling of heavier and bulkier materials much easier. Furthermore, the internal space of the engraver has been optimised to provide a maximum work area within a minimal overall footprint.

The Speedy 360 is available with either a CO2 or fibre laser, or a combination of the two. A range of engraving tables and accessories will also be shown, including the JobControl Vision camera system for optimum engraving/cutting accuracy. The closed design of the 360 protects guide components from the infiltration of dirt and dust to guarantee minimal cleaning downtime and the lowest cost of ownership. ■

The Speedy 360 is available with either a CO2 or fibre laser, or a combination of the two. A range of engraving tables and accessories will also be shown, including the

B & W highlights new technology

Blackman & White (B&W) will be promoting its range of flatbed cutters, routers and laser cutters on Stand G10.

The company, which is the only UK manufacturer of large format cutters for the sign and display sectors, will demonstrate its new image recognition software that uses the latest generation of camera technology with advanced distortion control to deliver a high speed, accurate solution for sign and print cutting and registration.

Visitors will also be able to see new conveyor belt technology in use on a 1.6m Versa-Tech, which enables fast and easy control for switching between the laser and knife conveyor belts. A versatile cutter with a multi-head feature, it can be used with a wide range of substrates ranging from self-adhesive vinyl, through to Foamex, Dibond, Foamcore, acrylic, textiles, PVC, sandwich board, to card and paper and is available in flatbed, conveyorised, or laser-equipped options to offer excellent functionality combined with a fast return on



investment.

Blackman & White will also be using the show to highlight its sister website, www.cuttingresources.com,

which offers speedy delivery on spare parts, additional modules and consumables for its own machines and those of all other major manufacturers.. ■

Thinklaser to make a mark

Thinklaser will demonstrate the range of Lightblade engraving and cutting machines for non-metallic surfaces.

The Lightblade 3040 is the smallest of the company's flatbed CO2 machines with a processing area of 300 x

400mm, but larger machines up to 1600 x 1000mm are also available.

To demonstrate the flexibility of the machines, the company will show its 'Laser Origami' process with which a laser can be used to make 3D objects by introducing bends rather than

joints into the product and eliminating the need for manual assembly. ■



Cutting, Routing & Engraving

AG/CAD presents the dynamic duo

On Stand D24, AG/CAD will be bringing together the power of KASEMAKE CAD and the speed, precision and quality of the South Korean made DYSS X5 and X7 digital cutters, which combine to offer both unrivalled performance and return on investment, while also providing signmakers with the perfect partners for their digital printer.

The DYSS range of digital cutters, which includes the X5 and X7 machines that will be demonstrated

on the stand, provides precise, efficient, camera-guided routing and knife cutting, automating finishing, reducing mistakes, and keeping labour costs down to the absolute minimum. The latest K-CUT Vision system facilitates the automatic cutting of materials up to 3.2m wide, and unlimited length with the optional Roll-Off unit.

Equipped with an array of tools to suit the demands of most signmaking staples, the powerful router can be used to shape substrates such as

acrylic and Dibond, while vinyl can be used in conjunction with the kiss cut tool, and plastics, foamex and polypropylene with the heavy-duty drag knife.



An investment in a DYSS cutter could pay for itself within a year and AG/CAD offers competitive pricing together with a range of three and five

year leasing options. ■

Cut and wrap solutions from Friedheim



On Stand K50, Friedheim International will be demonstrating the efficacy of the Lasercomb ProDigi NEO 2517 digital cutting system.

Included in a number of new product refinements is a modular tool facility for processing different types of material and an oscillating knife cutting attachment.

The company will also demonstrate the Audionpak H25 Seal/Shrink Combi wrapping machine to show how this can provide signmakers with 'added value' opportunities. Related solutions from other companies within Friedheim International's Converting Division will also be on display. ■

XYZ to showcase Trident

On Stand F20, XYZ International will demonstrate the latest and larger-format integrated triple-head XYZ Trident 6010 hybrid digital print finishing machine.

Said to be the most innovative and versatile combined CNC routing and knife-cutting solution in its class, Trident has been developed to comprehensively resolve problems frequently encountered by digital print finishers and in particular those that relate to the need to process an ever-increasing range of different flexible and/or rigid substrates that require wider, longer and deeper processing capabilities, whilst obviating the need to purchase separate machines to carry out all of the routing and cutting requirements of digital print finishing.

In addition to the powerful 10hp routing spindle to accommodate the most demanding applications, the Trident 6010 incorporates both oscillating and tangential knife-cutting units. These are interchangeable and will process virtually any type of rigid or flexible substrate, including materials as diverse as aluminium and other non-ferrous metals, aluminium composite materials (ACM's), acrylic and plastics, foamed and corrugated board, vinyl, cardboard and paper. A longer-stroke knife unit will

allow the use of blades of up to 120mm in length for processing thicker materials.

Other key features of the XYZ Trident 6010 include a rigid steel construction to better accommodate more vigorous machine operation, an exclusive live vacuum deck for maximum material hold-down efficiency and an integrated helical rack and pinion drive system for enhanced routing/cutting accuracy. Optional machine enhancements include an expanded ATC (Automatic Tool Change) facility and the latest XYZ AVS (XYZ Vision System) for more precise registration mark location to guarantee 100 per cent routing/cutting accuracy.

XYZ International will also promote its 24/7 online CNCRouterShop division. This provides a host of customer support services, not least of which is the provision of routing tools and accessories that will accommodate the requirements not only of XYZ International machines but also any other make of machine regardless of type or country of origin. ■



Tool up with ITC


On Stand E50, cutting tool specialist manufacturer Industrial Tooling Corporation (ITC) will be presenting its new Folio Product Catalogue. This is packed with information on new, upgraded or recently launched solutions.

Key new products include the range of balanced cutting tools for high-



speed spindles on routers and cutting machines. They offer improved precision and an extended tool life as well as imparting an enhanced surface finish to materials being processed. Other products on show will be the popular Clearcut routing tools range, the diameter of which has now been increased from six to eight millimetres. ■

SO DECOR

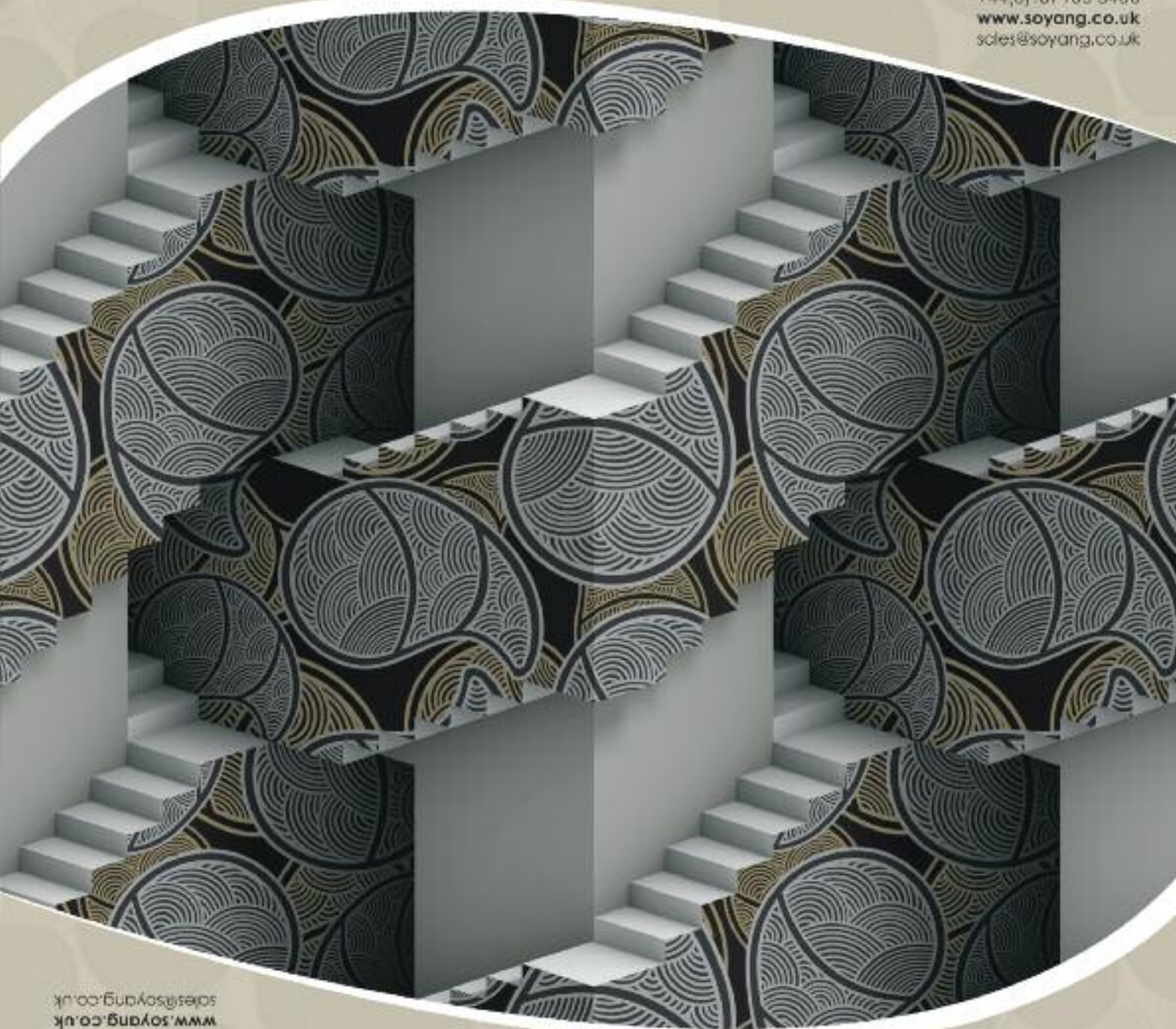
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SO

Materials

Antalis offers coffee and shopping!

Antalis UK will showcase its products within a retail setting on its 'Coffee Shop' themed stand (StandL20), while its experts from the sign and display materials sector will be on hand to advise and answer any questions.

Visitors will be able to see a wide variety of different materials, including products from the Coala, Drytac, Orafol and 3A Composites ranges, all of which are compatible for use in conjunction with the most popular ink

technologies and printers.

New products on show will include digitally printable, non-woven wallcoverings from Antalis' latest collaboration with Graham & Brown, which are designed to provide stunning wall graphic applications.

The second new introduction is DISPA display board, the latest addition to the 3A Composites range. DISPA is a unique, internally embossed multiple layer board, which is ideal for use for short-term indoor sales displays and is made

from 100 percent recyclable paper. An excellent alternative to plastic products, DISPA is both strong and rigid and offers a smooth white surface that is ideal for displaying standout graphics.

Other products from 3A Composites will include DIBOND, Forex, Smart-X and Kapa board/composite materials, all of which will be shown alongside the Orafol range of plotter and digital



vinyls and matching Oraguard laminates, plus the Drytac range of pressure-sensitive adhesives and over-laminates. ■

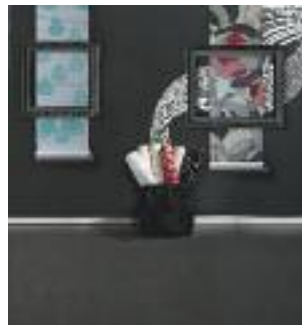
Soyang has it covered

On Stand A10 Soyang Europe will introduce its new collection of interior decoration materials together with its substantial textile, signage and graphics ranges, which are suitable for printing with sublimation, solvent, UV and latex technologies.

Its new collection also includes the European manufactured Decal range of materials, which includes

everything from high-quality, self-adhesive vinyls to a variety of printable wallpapers.

In addition, visitors to the show will also be able to consult the Soyang team, who will be on hand to discuss its staple sign and graphics products and its wide selection of new textile substrates, which includes frontlit, backlit, black back and mesh options ■



Life's a beach!

Visitors to the stand that Art Systems is sharing with Neschen should be sure to bring a bucket and spade, in order to take full advantage of the stand's centrepiece - a beach, complete with beach hut and lots of Neschen rock!

Visitors will also be invited to consult the team of Neschen media application experts who will be on hand to talk them through the benefits of all of its latest materials, including Neschen non PVC, non woven, Green Wall Performance Wallpapers, a greener solution for printed decorative wall coverings, Neschen Window Grip for crystal clear and vivid window graphics, together



with the award winning Print N' Walk, which provides outstanding results on a broad range of interior floors.

In addition, further information will also be available on the materials' ease of use across more applications, thanks to the extended range of Neschen's products that now feature the innovative 'easy dot' adhesive system. Visit the beach on **Stand R41** to find out more! ■



Perspex set to shine



On Stand C12, Perspex Distribution will introduce its PosterBOX 3 Sloan LED modules.

These are designed to meet the need for ultra-bright and even illumination in the large, shallow and textile-faced single- and double-sided light boxes up to three metres wide, which are used primarily in the retail display sector.

Also on show will be the first flexible LED light panel that can be curved by hand, together with Alupanel Aluminium Composite panels to which the new Alupanel A-Lite Digital version has now been added. ■

A plethora of products from Hexis UK

On Stand G60, Hexis UK will be showcasing a wide range of new products from its four key divisions – sign, digital, automotive and textile.

Amongst the products on display will be its recently introduced range of PVC-free A5000 Series films, a high-performance 60µm high gloss cast polyurethane film for outdoor signage applications that can be applied on a wide variety of flat, concave or convex surfaces. PVC and phthalate-free, Hexis A5000 Smartac Evolution also offers easy weeding down to 3mm and, thanks to its green credentials, it is suitable for use in all public areas

Hexis UK will also be highlighting its

new cast film ranges, Castac KG10000 and Smartac KG8000, which offer more than 250 colour options between them, together with its Suptec premium opaque European-grade 100 percent polymeric PVC vinyl that offers a very high gloss finish and is available in 100 colours, plus the Ecotac E3000 series that includes 70 colour options in both gloss and matt finishes.

Digital options will include the recently announced PVC-free HX500WG2 and HXL300WG2 films. Hexis HX500WG2 is a 50µm cast polyurethane high gloss film designed specifically for the 'greener' wrapping of vehicles, while Hexis HXL300WG2, is a very high gloss 100µm cast latex film

for use on flat and slightly curved surfaces, such as posters billboards, wall and vehicle graphics. Both films are compatible with eco-solvent, latex and UV printing technologies.

The Hexis automotive division will be highlighting its Super Chrome HX30000 vehicle wrap that is currently available in seven colours, including red, purple, green, blue, titanium, silver and gold, with four more colours being introduced this spring. A 90µm high performance film, it has a high gloss surface finish with a mirror effect and has been specifically developed for temporary vehicle wrapping applications.

Also on display will be the Skintac



HX30000 and Skintac HX20000 Series films and HEXIS Bodyfence, a 155µm ultra-clear self-adhesive polyurethane film with advanced surface technology, specifically designed for the protection of vehicle bodies.

Finally, Hexis will be dispensing its new HEXIS Cutflex 100P series colour cards, together with the PoliFLEX Premium, Image and Tubitherm Flock colour cards and will also be pressing T-shirts on its Secabo TC7 Heatpress to give away during the show. ■

Drytac Europe delivers



Showing on Stand L20, with Antalis, Drytac Europe will be introducing its expanded range of Polar printable self-adhesive vinyls (SAVs) to the UK market for the first time.

The range of fully printable films now includes, Polar Monomeric printable matched component systems (MCS) films, Polar Polymeric films, Polar Cast PVC films, Polar HiGrab (super aggressive, high-tack adhesive) films and Polar SurfaceTac (low-

tack adhesive) films.

Available exclusively from Antalis in the UK, the Polar SAV range is suitable for numerous medium-term indoor and outdoor graphics applications and is printable in conjunction with eco-solvent, latex and UV inkjet technologies.

The films are matched with Drytac's range of clear overlaminates and have an outdoor durability of up to seven years, depending on the product. ■

Comprehensive solutions from Grafityp

Grafityp UK, which is celebrating its 25th year of trading, will be showing a wide range of sign vinyl and print media on Stand J30, while also offering a wealth of product demonstrations and lots of special show offers.

Products on display will include sign vinyls in the Grafitack and Graficast ranges, plus GrafiWrap films, including printable vehicle wrap films and laminates and one of the widest ranges of automotive and decorative films. The GrafiPrint range of print media offers products suitable for

every type of application and, in addition, visitors will also be able to see the Colibri range of GEF eco friendly films that include sign vinyl, print media and laminate variants.

As Roland DG's most successful authorised dealer for the last three years in a row, Grafityp will also be showcasing the latest range of Roland printers and printer/cutters, including the TrueVis VG-640 printer/cutter, the LEF-300 UV printer and the Texart sublimation printer, together with a wide selection of laminating machines.

Other stand attractions will include the company's wide range of garment and textile decoration products, which offer an array of materials for CAD Cutting and printing, plus many special effect films, as well as speciality films for applying to nylon fabrics and stretch-fabric sportswear.

Finally, visitors will also be able to see heat presses from Siser and Stahls, cutting plotters from GCC and Roland and the LaserPro range of engraving, cutting and marking machines. ■



Sign & Display Systems

Tecna on display

New display products to be showcased by Tecna on Stand H66 include a bespoke shelving unit and the T3 Affinity display system that can be used with the company's original T3 modular system.

Tecna will also be using the opportunity to promote the wide range of services it offers sign and

display companies. These include 24-hour CAD visuals, design consultancy, rendered visuals, marketing advice and UK and global installation support.

Tecna will also be using the occasion of the show to recruit resellers for the Affinity system and invites any company interested in joining the new T3 Affinity Global Partners Programme to visit the stand. ■



Taking wayfinding to the next level



Vista System will be using the occasion of the show to introduce its new, flat modular wayfinding system Vista Square on Stand L38.

Crafted using state of the art materials and assembly methods, Vista Square wayfinding products are extremely flexible and can be tweaked and designed to match any need. ■

Choice aplenty at Fairfield

The Fairfield Displays' stand (Stand A34) will be divided into three clear sections that are designed to provide visitors with a totally fresh viewpoint and lots of inspiration.

Products on display will include the fast growing LED Light Pocket Range, which has been expanded to include the stunning colour changing Light Pockets that are exclusive to Fairfield. Available in sizes A4 up to A2 and a selection of 11 different colourways, the units are incredibly bright and can be used to enhance a brand image or to draw attention to a special offer.

Sample units can be ordered direct from the stand.

Fairfield will also be introducing a large plug and play tablet style screen that can be operated via a built in android or pc system, which is incredibly cost effective, easy to use and aesthetically appealing. Also on display will be 'high brightness' screens that are supplied with an inbuilt software package that can be used either as a media player or as a complete network system.

In addition, visitors will be able to see the world's largest range of cable/rod



and sign support systems that offer a huge choice of fittings, thus facilitating the production of really original and creative signage.

Visit www.fairfielddisplays.co.uk for the latest product information.

William Smith shows off Quick Stand

On Stand C52, William Smith will be showing the portable Quick Stand signage display system, which has now been added to the company's extensive materials and hardware solutions portfolios and for which William Smith has been appointed exclusive distributor to the sign and graphics trade.

Available in three different formats, this timeless and fully customisable LED-illuminated system enables maximum visual impact, is easy to assemble and can be transported by a single person using the specially-designed Quick Stand case that is product-specific to ensure safe and secure transportation.

The aesthetically appealing presentation system is made from a combination of aluminium and steel and features a high-gloss finish. It is equipped with integrated LED technology for effective illumination and well-engineered fittings for safe and secure assembly and requires only a 220V power source.

The Quick Stand Single Screen Display is a practical and stylish system that incorporates a LED edge-lit display panel and two lightweight A4/A5 literature holders. It is ideal for point-of-sale environments, either as a stand-alone display unit or as part of a bank of units. Each display panel measures 600mm (length) x 900mm (height).

The Quick Stand Dual Screen Display is available in an identical size, with the option of banking together multiple units to form a large display wall. It is also ideal for point-of-sale presentations, as well as for exhibitions, conferences and special events.

The Quick Stand Display Desk

features a storage shelf with a striking gloss finish. It has similar applications, in addition to being especially ideal for installation at reception areas in public and commercial environments. The dimensions of the Quick Stand Display Desk are 900mm (length) x 985mm (height) x 500mm (width). ■



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Miscellaneous

Bright Green double up

Bright Green Technology, which will be exhibiting on Stand J22, will be showing its extended range of LED lighting systems for use in lightboxes, while also introducing a new module for the illumination of double-sided boxes.

Each of the new modules has 12 lensed LEDs, six on either side of the module, each of which produces a

145° beam angle that directs the light into a controlled pattern to ensure bright, even illumination across the lit surfaces. The wide beam angle not only improves illumination, but also reduces the total number of modules required.

Other LED systems on display will include the Bright Green LED Light Panel, which is now available in Dynamic White, and Bright Green



Beam, plus the company's edge lighting system for use with projecting signs. ■

Vivid showcases award winning products

On Stand G42, Vivid Laminating Technologies will be showing its award winning Matrix OPP Laminator which offers lamination, foiling, metallic finishes, spot UV effects, plus security print features. and their new lens film, which will all be demonstrated on Stand G42.

Visitors will also be able to see another

award-winning product, the Easymount Air Wide Format Laminator, which features a patented technology that controls the laminating rollers with pneumatic air pressure, thus enabling users to mount and laminate with remarkable precision as the rollers can be adjusted to suit a substrate's exact



thickness and pressure requirements resulting in faster production times. ■

Innotech launches Spike

Having recently become the official UK reseller of Spike, a smart laser measurement solution for use by sign and graphic companies, Innotech will be demonstrating the efficacy of this new device on Stand H52.

Initially introduced in the United States last year, where it has been credited with revolutionising the way that sign and graphic professionals conduct site surveys, Spike is a smart laser measurement solution that enables users to quickly measure either existing signs, or a site for sign placement, by capturing the width, height, and area of a space simply by taking a photograph with a smartphone or tablet.

The Spike device, mobile app, Spike cloud and smartphones and/or tablets are all designed to work



seamlessly together, to help simplify site surveys and speed up estimating processes by eliminating the use of ladders or bucket trucks.

Measurements are recorded on the photo, which can be exported as a PDF, or high resolution JPG that can easily be shared with customers and colleagues. The photographic record can also be used to create proofs, add photo verification to estimates, and to complete permit applications. Photos

can be accessed at any time via the mobile app or cloud-based tools, thus eliminating the need to revisit the location for any additional measurements required.

Innotech will be offering Spike, which works with both Google Android and Apple iOS Smartphones and Tablets, at a special show price, together with a 30-day money back guarantee, thus facilitating its trial use on purchasers' own site surveys. ■

Free online route to new business



Exhibiting on Stand M2, No-Minimum.co.uk is an automated web-to-print system designed to process online orders for digitally printed and laser-engraved promotional products quickly and easily.

Sign and graphics companies can get their own No-Minimum e-commerce site for free and use it to gain business they might otherwise miss out on.

No-Minimum.co.uk offers a wide range of high-quality promotional products that enable sign and graphics companies to expand their core offerings and attract new customers. The site is simple to customise with individual branding, via comprehensive yet easy-to-use admin tools, while the intuitive WYSIWYG editor means no IT skills or HTML coding are required.

Once set up, the customised e-commerce site needs no maintenance and users can sell products without intervention. Companies simply go online and select a product or products, upload artwork or choose from an extensive royalty-free image library and see a real-time proof of how it will look. Once the order is placed, it is automatically sent to print and then dispatched directly to the customer.

Payment is made online by a debit or credit card and the gross profit automatically transferred into a nominated bank account. ■



Win a Mimaki printer

Specialist insurance provider to the UK sign and graphics industry, Signelite (Stand A24), is offering visitors the chance to win a Mimaki JV300 printer in its 'Crack the Safe' competition. All visitors have to do is visit the stand, fill in their details and enter a chosen code.

The company has provided a large number of sign and graphics companies with specially tailored insurance policies which cover a wide range of liabilities and which might not be available from any other insurance company. ■

CADlink demonstrates the power of 10

The new SignLab version 10 sign making software from CADlink Technology will be demonstrated in the popular SignLab Theatre on Stand R16.



This new software is said to have evolved following extensive consultation with resellers and existing end users and now

incorporates a number of new text, design and production workflow tools. ■

A touch of magic

On Stand F60, TheMagicTouch will demonstrate how sign and graphic producers can open up new markets and create new revenue streams using the company's wide range of products.



These include toner-based transfer papers, dye-sublimation and eco-solvent printable media and flex and flock materials from the MagiCut range.

Of special interest will be the award-winning WOW transfer papers for use in the full-colour decoration of fabrics such as cotton, polyester and even nylon used in the printwear and promotional products sector. The product requires no cutting or weeding.



Completing TheMagicTouch presence will be other products such as the embossed 123Flex material and the

UV-certified HT Metal material for POS and signage applications. Entry-level printers at under £300 will also be on display. ■

A new slant on installation

Graphicinstallers.co.uk will be launching its brand new management software



on Stand E58, which is designed to help sign and print companies to interact more effectively with their installation teams.

information can be shared and all relevant parties can keep track of a project's progress. This is especially useful when working with clients and campaigns where multiple sites are involved.

The software represents the culmination of Graphicinstallers.co.uk's 20 years experience of managing installation projects and will help companies to identify new installation providers while also managing and communicating with their existing teams to achieve maximum efficiency and client satisfaction.

There are no upfront costs or contracts, users simply pay a monthly subscription fee for as long as necessary and fees are scaled in line with the total number of installers used.

Sign and print companies can enter project information on their desktop computers, to be viewed, via a mobile app, by their installation teams. The software enables new users to be added whenever necessary, so that

Installers are invited to register for inclusion on the site's national database, free of charge, with no ongoing fees, where they can be found by prospective clients who can categorise their search using any combination of location, skills and/or qualification criteria. ■

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First call for entries



Now in their third year, the British Sign Awards, which are organised by the BSGA and supported by 3M, have become a benchmark for the best in British sign making.

The awards are designed to reflect the incredible scope of the products and services offered by today's sign makers, ranging from hand crafted signs, through those produced using ever-improving print technology and media, to massive, engineered statement signs.

"The awards are now a fixture on the sign industry calendar and the presentation ceremony, which will return to the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on 3rd November, is the highlight of the industry year," said David Catanach. "It's an occasion when the industry comes together to celebrate the outstanding work of signmakers and have a thoroughly enjoyable time."

There is a new master of ceremonies for this year's awards presentation. Broadcaster *Bill Turnbull*, who as a presenter of BBC Breakfast has been a fixture on our early morning television screens for 15 years, will host the awards.

"Support for the Awards continues to grow and competition for the 15 signmaker awards is likely to be fiercer than ever," said David. "We are delighted to welcome back sponsors from last year including **3M** as the headline sponsor, **Soyang (Wide Format Award)**, **Blackburns Metals and Plastics (Architectural Sign)**, **William Smith (Commercial Vehicle Graphics)**, **Roland (Young Signmaker of the Year)**, **Epson (The Innovation Award)**, **Nationwide Platforms (Roll-out Programme)**, **Spandex (Wrap of the Year)**, **Atlantic Tech Services (Wayfinding Award)** and **Trade Etching Direct (Craftsman Award)**.

"They have now been joined by **Signfab**, who are sponsoring the **Illuminated Sign of the Year**, **Pyramid Display Materials**, who will present the **Small Signmaker Award**, and **Metamark**, sponsor of the **Interior Signage Award**.

"We also have the sign industry's two leading journals, **Sign Directions** and **SignLink**, as supporters of the awards."

The awards are now open for entries and full



---Broadcaster *Bill Turnbull* will host this year's awards.



details of entry criteria together with entry forms can be found on the awards website at www.britishsignawards.org

"There's still plenty of time to enter with a deadline of Midnight on Friday, September 9th for most of the awards but if you have completed a project you would like considered there's no harm in getting your entry in early," added David.

"The one exception is the new Roland Young Signmaker Award. The closing date for this is Friday, 5th August because the shortlisted entrants will be visited at their place of work by the award assessors."

The awards also recognise the importance to the industry of particular market sectors, including retail and leisure, as well as the increasing influence sign makers have on interior decor.

There are also two awards for vehicle signage – the first for Commercial Vehicle Graphics of the Year and the second for the Car Wrap of the Year.

A special award recognises that the sign industry in the UK consists primarily of small businesses. The 'Small Sign Maker of the Year'

Award is open to all businesses employing from 1 to 5 people and this year there is a new award for 'The Young Sign Maker of the Year'.

The awards are open to all sign businesses based in the UK. Entry is free and easy (simply complete the appropriate entry form, attach some images and hit 'send'). Judging is by an independent panel of industry experts.

Shortlisted entrants will be invited to the BSGA's Gala Award Event which will take place at East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on Thursday, November 3rd, when all the award category winners and the winner of ultimate accolade – the 2016 Sign of the Year – will be unveiled.

Full details of all award categories and information on how to enter at www.britishsignawards.org

New Board Member

David Derbyshire, Managing Director of Astra Signs in Manchester, has been co-opted to the BSGA Council.

David started Astra as a one-man signwriting business and over the past 30 years has built the business into one of the biggest full service sign makers in the UK.

"We are delighted that David has agreed to join the Council," said David Catanach. "His skills and experience in sign making and his knowledge of the latest legislation affecting the industry will be extremely valuable."



Show provides chance to catch up

Sign & Digital UK, which kicks off at the NEC on Tuesday, 19th April, looks likely to be bigger and more exciting than ever with over 200 stands showing everything from printers and inks to display systems and soft signage and, for the first time, the show will feature digital signage.

In addition, organisers Faversham House have laid on a whole range of free seminars and workshops, including a new 'Become a Wrap Expert Workshop' featuring demos by some of the world's best vehicle wrappers.

The BSGA will be at the show sharing stand E68 with our media partner Sign Directions Magazine which is celebrating the publication of its 150th edition.



Everyone – members and non-members alike – are welcome to visit us on the stand to talk about the latest developments affecting the industry and how the Association is addressing them.

The BSGA is also presenting three seminars in the Business Theatre. "The subjects are of vital importance to every sign maker in the UK and the seminars provide an ideal opportunity for show visitors to bring themselves up-to-date," said David Catanach of the BSGA.

The first seminar, on Tuesday, 19th from 12.15 to 12.45, is about Sign Maintenance and Planning Regulations. "The Association is fighting a continual battle against planners and the fact is that without these efforts, planning regulations would be horrendously complicated and sign businesses would be facing massively increased costs," said David. "The seminar will also cover the latest developments on sign



maintenance within BS559 and explain what is required from signmakers under the law."

The second, on Wednesday, 20th from 12.15 to 12.45, covers the question of Apprenticeships in Sign Making and will be delivered by Ian Lockhart of Cogent Skills which delivers the apprenticeships of behalf on the Department for Education. Currently there are only 150 sign making apprentices in the UK, but research has shown that Apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and capable workforce and also increase employee retention. Ian will provide details on costs, courses and on the funding available for apprenticeships.



The final seminar, on Thursday, 21st, from 12.15 to 12.45 will deal with new and existing standards for sign design and construction. Eurocodes, and how they relate to the British Standard (BS599), will be explained, as will changes to Building Regulations. Signmakers will also be made aware of their legal obligations and the possible consequences of failing to meet them. The seminar will also provide detailed information of calculating wind loads, sign post sizes and foundations in order to be Eurocode compliant.

For more details about these and other seminars and the Sign&Digital UK show visit the show website at www.signuk.com

Membership on the rise

We are delighted to report that membership of the BSGA is on the rise. The Association's role within an ever changing industry is increasingly important and a growing number of sign makers as well as leading sign buyers and specifiers are recognising the fact.

The BSGA plays a major role in representing the views of sign makers and defending the industry in terms of new and modified standards, whether of British or European origin. Just as importantly it strives to continually advise and educate members, through guidance notes and technical guidelines about what is required of them under the approved standards.

And, of course, once standards are in place it is incumbent, under the BSGA Code of Practice, for all members to meet the required standard.

The BSGA emblem is, therefore, a symbol of a professional sign maker and delivers this message to buyers and specifiers, an increasing number of whom now demand BSGA membership as a prerequisite of the tendering process.

"Our message does now seem to getting through and we have been delighted to welcome a considerable number of businesses to our ranks over the past couple of months," said David Catanach.

Broadstairs-based Cygnia Maintenance, one of the largest sign maintenance companies in the UK, is amongst them. "It's great that Cygnia is now a member of the Association and we are particularly pleased that their Managing Director, Phil Sharman, has joined the Technical Committee and is playing an active role in the development of the BS599



The Cambridge Sign Company, winner of the Small Signmaker of the Year Award in 2015 is now a BSGA member.

maintenance standard," said David.

"We are also particularly pleased that the Cambridge Sign Company, crowned Small Signmaker of the Year at the 2015 BSGA Awards, has joined the association. Hopefully a lot more smaller sign makers will follow this lead."

By coincidence Pyramid Display Materials, who are sponsoring the Small Signmaker of the Year at the 2016 Awards, has also joined the BSGA as an associate (supplier) member. Headquartered in Manchester but with branches in Newcastle, Castleford, Leeds and Birmingham, Pyramid supply sign makers with a range of leading brands and have recently introduced an e-commerce website to cater specifically for the needs of the small sign maker.

"Our associate members form the backbone of the Association and bring a huge amount of technical and product expertise to the BSGA," said David. "We're delighted to count Pyramid Display Materials amongst their number."

Other new members include:

Signs and Safety Ltd, based in **Redhill**, Surrey. Specialists in the design, manufacture and installation of bespoke signage solutions.

Nationwide Signage, based in **London**. Sign making and sign writing services for business clients.

Signspec Ltd, based in **Pontefract**. A specialist large format digital printing company with well over 20 year's experience providing retail graphics and signs, interior and exterior graphics, POP and POS and vehicle graphics and wraps.

Multitechnic Ltd, based in **Morpeth**, Northumberland. Specialist trade-only supplier of Chemical Etching and Digital Anoprinting. Manufacture etched signs in stainless steel and brass and anoprinted signs in satin or matt aluminium.

Jonsigns, based in **Gateshead**. Operating from a 16,500 sq ft site, Jonsigns has areas dedicated to design, acrylic fabrication, metal fabrication, digital, vinyl, assembly, and quality control. Producing signs of distinction for 17 years.

Alpine Media, based in **Stockport**. Specialists in the supply and installation of signage and printed media. Successfully carried out over 800+ installations around the UK and Europe in 2014.

Lavastar Visual Solutions, based in **Hook**, Hampshire. Sign Manufacturers covering London and the South of England, with a portfolio including everything from building wraps and construction signs to wayfinding, event signage, window graphics and manifestations.

Andesign Ltd, based in **Sutton Coldfield**. Specialists in large format print, signage and graphics with a service covering everything from design concepts to print and delivery.

Bayside Graphics, based in **Newton Abbot** in Devon. From vehicle graphics and vinyl wraps, to signage and display. Full service from design to completion.

Emtec Branding, part of the **Emtec Group**, which has wide ranging interests in building services and engineering, provides a comprehensive signage service including design, manufacture, installation and repair. Emtec Branding has offices in **Glasgow, Bristol and Edinburgh**.

Settling an argument

While arguments between the BSGA's sign maker members and their customers are fairly rare, the Association is sometimes called on to help resolve disputes.



One such case came up recently and after carefully examining all the circumstances, the BSGA came down in favour of the member rather than his customer.

"The sign maker had produced work for the customer a couple of years previously and everybody had been happy with the finished results," explained David Catanach.

"More recently the customer opened a second facility and asked for the original signage to be repeated. However, this time he was unhappy with the results and refused to pay.

"We examined both sides of the argument and, in the end, came out in favour of the sign maker. What we found was that, while the customer wanted to recreate the original signage, he was unwilling to spend the same budget.

"The sign maker had clearly explained that in order to reduce costs, alternative materials would have to be used and an exact match to the original signage could not be guaranteed. The customer accepted the quotation and gave approval for the work to go ahead.

"Had the signmaker simply gone ahead and used the cheaper materials without reference to the customer, we would have come down on the side of the customer. However, it was clear from the correspondence and submissions that the sign company had made the risks of reducing the budget clear to the client.

The service provided by the BSGA has no legal standing, but it is often a means of bringing a dispute to an acceptable end without recourse to expensive and time-consuming litigation.

"When we are asked to arbitrate in such disputes, our aim is to be scrupulously fair to both sides. If a member is at fault we will say so and suggest remedial action or suitable recompense," said David.

An invaluable resource for serious sign makers

If you've ever had to provide a presentation to a client about the various signage options available to them and have been stuck for words, there's a terrific crib sheet available to you – if you are a BSGA member.

Section C1 of the BSGA's Technical Guidelines is headed 'The Sign Function – Concepts and Types' and provides a detailed overview of the function of signs, types of signs and construction methods, together with the options for mounting signs.

The BSGA Technical Guidelines, created by members of the Technical Committee and sign specialists over the past 25 years, are constantly updated to stay abreast of both the latest technology available in the industry and the changing standards sign makers have to meet.

The Guidelines, considered by many in the industry the bible of sign making, are made up of ten sections, ranging from commercial factors such as contracts, terms of sale, maintenance agreements and insurance,

through sign design and manufacture, to installation and maintenance of signs. Guides also cover health and safety, quality assurance, environmental matters and the latest on legislation and standards affecting the industry.

A raft of updates to the Guidelines have been issued over the past few months including a new Maintenance Price Index (B6), updated information on The Sign Function (C1) and amendments to Animation (C2.4), Hot and Cold Cathode Lighting Design (C2.7), Rigid Plastic Materials (D1.2a), High Voltage Transformers (E1a), High Frequency Ballasts for Cold Cathode Tubes (E1b) and Lamps and Control Gear Operating at Medium Voltage (E4).

Updated Guides on Floodlighting of Signs (C2.3a), External Illumination – Compact Luminaires (C2.3b), External Illumination – Linear Luminaires (C2.3d), and Starting of Neon Tubes and other Discharge Lamps (D3.5) are about to be issued.



A new set of factsheets from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) covering Signage, Lighting and Visual Contrast (C2.9a, b & c) will also be published shortly.

The complete Technical Guidelines are available for download from the members' area of the Association's website at www.bsga.co.uk

Over 5000 pages of planning jargon

If some of the people who work in local planning departments had their way, every sign produced within their area of influence would be hand-painted on wood and all would be the same size and colour.

However, the BSGA is continuing the never ending battle to make sure that the planners don't overstep the mark.

Under current planning law every local authority in the UK is entitled to draw up its 'Local Plan' which provides the Council's Core Planning Strategy and Management Policies. Every one of these weighty tomes – some up to 300 pages long – is different and every one could affect signs in a different way.

The BSGA and its planning experts study every Local Plan published and where necessary object to the content or suggest more practical options.

"Our aim is to ensure that these emerging Local Plan Policies do not inappropriately apply more onerous considerations on signs than already apply within the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and the Town and Country



Planning Regulations," explained David Catanach of the BSGA. "Without this constant monitoring, local planners across the country could implement a range of individual restrictions and requirements on signs that would create havoc for signmakers and increase their, and their customer's, costs massively.

"Our experts object to the inclusion of any unnecessary restrictions and suggest amendments and additions to the Plans for the purpose of clarity."

Between October 2016 and March 2016, the BSGA's team has studied and commented on a total of 17 Local Plans – roughly 5000 pages of closely typed planning jargon.

"People can see what an onerous task it is," said David. "But without this constant backroom work, the life of signmakers in the UK would be a lot more complicated because what becomes policy in one local authority will almost certainly be copied by the next resulting in the spread of unworkable planning restrictions across the country.

Local Plans acted on over the past six months include:

Woking; Falkirk; Hillington; North Tyneside; Ipswich; Southwark; Blackburn with Darwen; Croydon; Dartford; Ashfield; Telford; Maidstone; Haringey; Nottingham; Waltham Forest; Hyndburn; Camden.



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This month, **Mark Godden** discusses

The power of Google



For reasons that I could articulate but which would comfortably consume my 1200 word ration, I regard Apple as being amongst the coolest companies on the planet. It became all the cooler not so long ago when it was worth more than any other company on Earth. It may still be now for all I now. Apple = cool.

Apple may be cool, and very valuable, but when it comes to power and influence, it doesn't even begin to register on the same scales that Google dominates. Google = powerful.

We tend to get all steamed up about the so-called power of broadcast media and the mind-warping influence press barons are thought to exercise over a beguiled population. I wonder though, if that really is the case now. Surely, Google is a much more pervasive and influential force these days?

If your relationship with Google is such that you think of it as nothing more than a place you go to search for stuff, this view may seem a bit extreme or totally off target. If though, you get what goes on under the bonnet at Google to some extent, you may hold a more sympathetic position.

Google is simply awesome in the scope and the scale at which it operates. The brilliance of what it accomplishes is down to a combination of dazzling artificial intelligence, the talent of the engineers who create it and the mind boggling resources it can muster to throw at any project it deems fit.

When you search for something on Google, what you type in may be completely new to it. Twenty percent of what Google chews on in the course of any day is just that - new. Google then serves you up a face-full of results that seem spookily relevant to what you're actually looking for. That doesn't happen by accident. If I go to Google and start looking for Apple, I don't get a helping of Granny Smith's for my trouble; I get what I'm

looking for.

Google is supposed to have at its centre an algorithm that presides over its decisions and what it serves. In fact, it has many. Lots of people out there are waiting to take a nice chunk of change from you because they understand, they say, the way the cogs mesh inside Google and, because of that, they can propel you to prominence by fooling Google and its all-too-artificial intelligence. That may have been true. Once.

These days, Google is unbelievably smart. Speak to it and it can both digitise and parse what you're saying and then do a reasonable job of speaking back to you in another language or script. It's smart enough to know that if you're looking for Man U, Man City and Arsenal, that you're searching within an abstract concept it recognises as the British Premier League. Look in terms of closer specifics still and search instead for 'cheapest price online for large Arsenal away strip shirt', and Google connects that with someone interested in providing it for you and who's looking in Google's long-tail data for your query. Google then mediates in the sale, introduces the two of you and scrapes a little money for itself out of the arrangement.

Google is so smart now it can smell a can of Spam being opened from the other side of the world. Google punishes anyone it finds who contrives to game it or manipulate its attention. Subverting Google's mission to give its users what they're looking for, with one that instead forces the wrong diet upon them, earns black marks and a cold-shoulder from Google's army of web-crawling 'spiders'. If Google decides

you don't exist, that's not a great place to be.

There are all sorts of buttons Google can press and knobs it can twist that will propel information to the top of the massive reserves it has indexed and is sat on. Just saying, but I would think that Google is quite capable of swinging an election, because it controls what content ultimately finds those who're looking for it. I really do get the feeling that, if Google wanted an election that saw Mr. Blobby facing down Donald Trump, it could probably move opinion at least some of the way.

Whether we like it, or whether we don't, Google mediates in all sorts of ways in business and in life. If you have something to sell to a customer out there, and I hope you do, you really have to sell it to Google first. Do a good job of that of course, and you've a better than odds-on chance of being found by the very customer you're looking for and who's looking for you.

Knowing what customers are looking for is about nine-tenths of what you need to know and knowing how to appeal to them is probably the remaining ten percent. Presenting to somebody a well thought through positioning that offers signs as a means to promote a business is perhaps a good example. Signs ultimately do promote businesses and are a valid part of a solution set for those looking for the 'how' in this context. How much less crowded is the place where you'll get to engage with someone searching in those terms, than the place you'd finish up if you want to be found among the results for someone searching for a 'Sign Company?'

About seventy percent of Google's search volume finishes up in what's called 'The Long Tail'. Google it. If you can be found in there, you'll be among some very specific and well-qualified interest.

Google doesn't have an editor. What you'll find between its virtual covers amounts to anything that finds its way onto the internet and which Google can, in turn, find. To that extent, it'll never offer the experience I hope you're enjoying now of reading something you've effectively stumbled over. You didn't come here looking for Google 101.

That's the nice thing about focused print isn't it? To get yourself, your company and anything you're doing that's newsworthy in front of a highly relevant audience. All you have to do is take a picture of it, email it, to us in this case, and maybe spend a few minutes on the 'phone explaining it. Sign Directions will do the rest and your peers and potential customers will see it.

Of course, Google can find much of what's between Sign Directions' covers too. In fact, being a magazine with an affiliation to a trade body confers something of a reputation on Sign Directions when Google comes crawling.

On that basis, you tell us what you're up to, and somehow, the world finds out. So rather than swiping past to the back cover now, why not get your latest project in front of our editors?

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